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# Majors Rules

Newton SouthEast Little League (NSELL) rules comply with *The Official Regulations, Playing Rules, and Operating Policies* (a.k.a. *Rulebook*), authored by Little League Baseball, Inc. Managers and coaches are strongly encouraged to download the free digital version of the *Rulebook*. The rules cited in this NSELL document are compliant with the 2025 *Rulebook*. Many of the rules below are common rules all Little League participants should know, or are rules that are often misunderstood. A citation from the *Rulebook* follows each of those entries. Where the *Rulebook* allows for rule variations, defined as “local league options,” NSELL’s use of those options are specified here. The Majors Commissioner’s and/or Umpire-in-Chief’s interpretation of these rules shall be final. Intentional violation of one or more rules may result in forfeiture (Rule 4.15(e)), or disqualification, with further penalties imposed at the discretion of the NSELL Board of Directors (Rule 9.05(c)). These rules apply to regular season games, the All-Star game, interleague games where NSELL is the home team, and playoff games.

## Playing and Substitution

1. Batting Order: (Local league option) NSELL adopts a policy of a continuous batting order that will include all players on the team roster present for the game batting in order. If a player arrives late to a game, he/she would be added to the end of the current lineup. (Rule 4.04)
2. Mandatory Play: Every rostered player present at the start of a game will participate for a minimum of six (6) defensive outs and bat at least (1) time (Regulation IV(i)). The *Rulebook* does not require the minimum defensive innings to be successive. The start of a game occurs when the players of the home team take their defensive positions, the first batter takes a position in the batter’s box, and the umpire calls, “play” (Rule 4.02). Any player who arrives before the first pitch of the game must play at least three complete innings in the field, and any player who arrives before the final out of the third inning must play at least one complete inning in the field, except in those cases where a full six inning game cannot be played due to weather, darkness, run rule, etc. (*NSELL Rule*).   If a player does not get to play the minimum innings, the player shall start the next scheduled game, play any previous requirement not completed, and the requirements for the current game before being removed defensively (Regulation IV(i)).
3. Courtesy Runner: (Local league option) NSELL permits a “courtesy runner” for the catcher and/or pitcher of record when there are (2) outs. The “courtesy runner” must be the player in the batting order who made the last out (Rule 7.14(b)). The “courtesy runner” also applies if a runner is unable to run the bases due to injury, illness, or ejection (adopted from Tournament Playing Rule 9e).
4. Number of Players: (Local league option) A game may not start with less than (8) players on each team (Rule 4.16(a)). Games should be delayed up to fifteen minutes to wait for each team to have 8 players (NSELL rule). After 15 minutes, if only one team has at least 8 players, the NSELL Board of Directors deems that team the winner by forfeiture. An official game cannot begin or continue if a team has fewer than 8 players (Rules 4.16 & 4.17).   Local league option: When batting 8, no out will be taken in the 9th spot (Rule 4.04 NOTE 3).  If a 9th player arrives, that player must be inserted into the game immediately and will bat at the end of the current lineup (Rule 4.04). If a game is forfeited due to lack of players, it is acceptable to play for fun with the players present. Pitcher and catcher limits still apply (NSELL rule).
5. Pitcher and Catcher Limits:

 Rest days (Regulation VI(d))

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| #Pitches thrown/game | Days Rest Req’d | Pitched on à | Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Can move to catcher after pitching? |
| 1-20 | 0 | Can pitch again: | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun | Yes |
| 21-35 | 1 | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun | Mon | Yes |
| 36-50 | 2 | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tues | If ≤ 40 pitches |
| 51-65 | 3 | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | No |
| 66-max | 4 | Fri | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | No |

 Max Pitches (Regulation VI(c))

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| League Age | Pitch Limit |
| 11-12 | 85 |
| 9-10 | 75 |
| 6-8 | 50 |

1. Pitch Limit Exception: If a pitcher reaches the pitch limit for his/her league age while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs: 1) That batter reaches base; 2) That batter is put-out; 3) The third out is made to complete the half-inning or the game; 4) The pitcher is removed from the mound prior to the batter completing his/her at bat (Regulation VI(c) EXCEPTION). The pitcher will be required to observe the calendar day(s) of rest for the threshold he/she reached during that at-bat, provided that pitcher is removed before delivering a pitch to another batter.
2. Pitcher Removal: A pitcher once removed from the mound cannot return as a pitcher (Regulation VI(b)).
3. Pitcher Warm Ups: Managers or coaches are permitted to warm up a pitcher at home plate or in the bullpen or elsewhere at any time (Rule 3.09).
4. No Slashing: A batter may not fake bunt, then take a full swing at the ball (*NSELL rule*).
5. Uncaught Third Strike: A batter becomes a runner when the third strike is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two out (Rule 6.09(b)). Force plays are in effect on the play (for example, if the bases are loaded with 2 outs, the catcher can step on home plate to end the inning).
6. Leading: When a pitcher is in contact with the pitcher’s plate and is in possession of the ball, and the catcher is in the catcher’s box ready to receive delivery of the ball, base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has reached the batter (Rule 7.13).
7. Sliding: Any runner is out when not attempting to slide or attempt to get around a fielder in order to avoid a collision while the fielder who has the ball is waiting to make the tag (Rule 7.08(3)).  It is considered obstruction when a defensive player blocks off a base, base line, or home plate from a base runner while NOT in possession of the ball (Rules 2.00 Obstruction, and 7.06).
8. Intentional Walks: The defense elects to “Intentionally Walk” the batter with the defensive manager announcing such decision to the plate umpire prior to, or during the at-bat. The manager must first request and be granted “time” by the umpire and then inform the umpire of the defense’s intent to walk the batter. The ball is dead and no other runners may advance unless forced by the batter’s award. The appropriate number of “[unthrown] balls” needed based on the count on the batter at the time of request will be added to the pitch count (Rule 6.08(a)(2)).
9. Infield Fly: A **batter** is out when an Infield Fly is declared (Rule 6.05(d)). An Infield Fly is a fair ball which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second, and third bases are occupied, before two are out (Rule 2.00 Infield Fly).
10. On-deck Batter: The on-deck [batter] is not permitted. The next batter may not pick up a bat until it is his/her turn at bat. (Rule 1.08 NOTE 1-2).
11. Run Rule: (Rule 4.10(e))
* **After 3 innings** (2 ½ innings if home team is ahead), if a team has a lead of **15+ runs**, then the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent.
* **After 4 innings** (3 ½ innings if home team is ahead), if a team has a lead of **10+ runs**, then the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent.
* **After 5 innings** (4 ½ innings if home team is ahead), if a team has a lead of **8+ runs**, then the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent.
* (NSELL Rule) For intraleague games, it is acceptable to play additional innings after the game is officially conceded. It's a good opportunity to use kids in different roles, while also being considerate to parents who rush to get to games only to be met with the prospect of going home after 45 mins.

## Games and Game Scheduling

1. Cancellation Decision: (NSELL rules) Until the scheduled game time, the manager of the home team, in consultation with the opposing manager, has authority to cancel a game due to inclement weather (assuming the city has not cancelled play on grass fields). Disagreements over field playability shall be brought to the Commissioner, who will render a decision. Aside from obvious washouts, the decision to cancel a game should not occur prior to 2 hours before scheduled game time. Cancellation requires the home manager to contact the opposing manager and the Umpire-in-Chief. **Umpire-in-Chief contact info: Elliott Loew emlpc@comcast.net (617) 875-2316**. Once a game begins, the umpire(s) are in charge and shall have sole authority to determine when a game shall be called, halted, or resumed on account of weather or the conditions of the playing field (Rule 4.01(d)).
2. Rescheduling: (NSELL rules) Games may not be rescheduled for any reason other than for issues related to inclement weather without the consent of the Commissioner.   Games must be rescheduled in the first available open slot during the week in which they were originally scheduled, unless the Commissioner determines that for compelling reasons, such as religious conflicts or other issues beyond the managers’ control, a later slot must be used. If there are no time slots available the rest of the same pitching week, the game must be rescheduled the following week.
3. Umpire No-show: (NSELL rules) If no umpire shows up for a game, the managers may agree to play an official game with a substitute umpire acceptable to both. In lieu of an acceptable substitute, either manager may insist that the official game is postponed. If an unofficial game is played, pitcher and catcher limits still apply.
4. Game Coordinator: If no adult umpire is available for a game, a Game Coordinator shall be assigned. (Rule 9.03(d)). The home team manager shall enlist an adult parent/spectator (not a coach or manager) to fulfill the duties of Game Coordinator (NSELL rule).
5. Regulation Game: At least four (4) innings have been completed, or 3 ½ innings if the home team has scored more runs than the visiting team has scored in its 4 completed half innings (Rule 4.10(c)(1-4).
6. Game Duration: Local league option: In NSELL, if the game has been played for 1 hour and 45 minutes, any inning which has been started prior to the time limit expiring will be completed. No new inning will begin once the time limit has expired (Rule 4:10(c)(2)). Games requiring a result (playoff game) may exceed the 1 hour and 45 minute limit (NSELL rule).
7. Suspended Games: If a game is halted before it has become a regulation game, it shall be resumed exactly where it left off (Rule 4.10(d)).
8. Tie Games: A regulation game that is tied in the regular season will end in a tie. Each team will get 1 point in the standings (NSELL rule).  If a tied playoff game is halted due to weather, maximum duration, or light failure, then it shall be resumed from the exact point at which they were halted in the original game (Rule 4.12). Regular season games needing a winner to determine playoff positions will be treated as a playoff game (NSELL rule).

## Equipment and Uniforms

1. Uniforms & Footwear: NSELL shall provide all players with conventional uniforms (Regulation I(c)6). All players on a team shall wear numbered uniforms identical in color, trim, and style (Rule 1.11(a)(1)). Shirts should be tucked in (NSELL rule). Shoes with metal spikes or cleats are not permitted (Rule 1.11(h)).
2. Batting Helmets: Use of the helmet by the batter, all base runners, and base coaches is mandatory. Use of a helmet by an adult base coach is optional (Rule 1.16).
3. Catchers: Male catchers must wear the metal, fibre, or plastic type cup, and approved long or short-model chest protector. All catchers must wear chest protectors with neck collar, throat guard, shin guards, and catcher’s helmet. All catchers must wear a mask, “dangling” type throat protector and catcher’s helmet during infield/outfield practice, pitcher warm-up, and games (Rule 1.17).
4. Bats: Bats must meet the USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat) (Rule 1.10). Non-wood and laminated bats shall bear the USA Baseball logo. Solid one-piece wood barrel bats do not require a USA Baseball logo. The bat diameter shall not exceed 2 5/8 inches. An illegal bat must be removed. A batter is out for illegal action when the batter enters the batter’s box with an illegal bat (Rule 6.06(d)).
5. Equipment on Field: No equipment shall be left lying in the field, either in fair or foul territory (Rule 3.14).
6. Game Balls: The home team supplies two new baseballs to the plate umpire prior to the start of the game (NSELL rule).

## Conduct

1. Cheering: The ability for a team to cheer for their batter or runners should not be restricted, unless there is a definite intent to gain an unfair advantage as per Rule 4.06(c). The chanting/cheering must be in good taste and be directed solely at their own team. A good rule of thumb is the chants/cheers may be as loud as the team desires as long as there is no crescendo or shrieking when the pitcher is delivering the pitch. No artificial noise making (i.e.- pounding on buckets, or fences, or air horns) is allowed. Umpires have the authority to disqualify any player, coach, or manager for unsportsmanlike conduct or language (Rule 9.01(d)).
2. Zero Tolerance Policy: (NSELL rules) NSELL has a zero-tolerance policy related to all participants, including umpires. Managers and coaches shall not complain, make comments, or in any way criticize the umpires. All people associated with the team shall support the umpires. Managers and coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and parents. Umpire complaints shall be directed to the Commissioner and/or the Umpire-in-Chief.
3. Dugout Cleanliness: Following the game, dugouts shall be cleared of trash and forgotten equipment (NSELL rule).

## Manager and Team Expectations

1. Posting Results on NSELL Website: (NSELL rules) All managers are expected to keep the website up to date.  The winning manager must post the score of the game.  Both managers must record all pitchers used with the pitch count (at minimum).  These activities must be done within 12 hours of the game OR before the team plays another game, whichever is sooner.  Interleague games must be recorded by the NSELL manager on the NSELL website (win or lose).
2. Dugouts: Reserved for players, one manager, and not more than two coaches (Rules 2.00). No spectator mingling (Rule 3.09). Home team has right of first refusal for the dugout along 3rd base. (NSELL rule).
3. Umpire Interaction: A manager or coach may not leave the bench or dugout except to confer with a player or an umpire and only after receiving permission from an umpire (Regulation XIV (d)).
4. Game Field Prep: (NSELL rules) The home team is responsible for pre-game field prep, which includes (but not limited to) chalking lines & boxes, and mound repair. After the game, the home team is also responsible for removing the bases, raking & dragging the dirt, replacing tarps, and ensuring all equipment is locked in the shed. **Teams who do not properly clean up the field after their game will be subject to having their practice privileges revoked.**

## Miscellaneous

1. Player Pool: The Player Agent shall manage a rotation of pool players willing to participate in extra games during the regular season when teams face a shortage of rostered players (Regulation V(c)). A pool player will not be permitted to pitch in that game. They must play at least 9 consecutive defensive outs and bat once (Regulation V(c)(3-4)). The player pool shall be utilized to ensure the roster is brought to 9.  Do not request a player from the pool and show up with >9 players.  The Player Pool may be used for City Series games (NSELL rule).
2. Replacement Players: Long-term replacement of players shall comply with Rulebook “Policy – Local League Maintenance of Rosters (Replacements)” and Regulation III(d). NSELL allows a manager to initiate the process of selecting a replacement within 5 days of a player being lost to a team during the playing season. Reasons for initiation of the replacement process may be the following:
	* Player moves to another locality too distant to commute for practice and play;
	* Player is injured and will not be able to return to play within a reasonable period of time (defined by NSELL as….)
	* Player has, for personal reasons, decided to terminate association with the team;
	* Any other justifiable reason, reviewed and approved by the Board.

The manager, Player Agent, League President, and Board shall comply with their responsibilities outlined in the Policy and Regulation III(d).

1. Interleague Games: (NSELL rules) The home team’s rules are in effect. If an NLL team is scheduled as the home team on an NSELL field against an NSELL opponent, it is the NSELL manager’s responsibility to ensure the field and equipment are maintained appropriately.  If a run rule has been met, there will be no additional innings played for fun in interleague games.
2. All-Star Game: (NSELL rules) Each manager shall provide the Commissioner with members of their team to play in the Majors All-Star Game. The number of players to be selected will be determined by the Commissioner. Managers will be selected based upon their won/loss records at the time of the All-Star Game. All managers are urged to participate as coaches at the All-Star Game. Players shall be selected based upon a secret-ballot vote by the players and coaches. Criteria for voting shall be based on performance and sportsmanship, regardless of age or positions. If a selected player is unable to attend the game, that player’s manager shall select another representative from his or her team. No alternative all-stars will be elected or invited to the All-Star Game.