



# 302 League - Instructional Level Rules

(Updated March 2026)

## Rules

- Same as Little League Baseball with the following exceptions.

## Behavior of Coaches, Team Members, Families, and Guests

- All Managers, Assistant Managers, Team Members, Families, and guests are subject to the 302 League Baseball Code of Conduct.
- The coach that is closest to the play is the person to rule on the current play.
- Any disputes must be arbitrated in a positive, sportsmanlike manner.
- Acting Head Coaches are the only ones to settle any disagreements.
- Improper behavior, foul language, and disrespect will not be tolerated (this includes parents and spectators). If improper behavior persists in a game, the offending person and/or player will be ejected and subject to further disciplinary action.
- Any coach, player or spectator that is ejected shall leave the field area and must remain away from the field area for the duration of the game.
- Each coach is responsible for their team's coaches, players and spectators behavior during the game.
- Each Head Coach must notify the league representatives of the teams involved in the game as soon as possible after the game when a conduct issue or removal of a person from a game occurs during a game, regardless of whether that issue is with a coach, parent/fan or player.

## Season

- Games that are canceled due to weather must be rescheduled within 3 days and played within 2 weeks of the originally scheduled game.
- The end of the season tournament will be concluded before July 1.

## Regulation Game

- Games consist of five innings unless the time limit discussed below is reached.
- No inning may be started after one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes from the time of first pitch. This rule applies whether or not a game is to be played on the field following the game in progress. This rule also applies to restarting an inning after a rain or weather delay; a delayed inning may not be restarted after one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes from the original scheduled start time.
- Head coaches shall discuss the time remaining after each full inning and agree in determining if an inning other than the 5<sup>th</sup> inning will be the final inning of that game prior to starting that inning.
- If darkness or weather ends a game prior to 3 complete innings of play the game will be suspended. If the game is called after 3 complete innings the game will be ruled complete.

### **Inclement Weather/Suspended Games/Rescheduled Games**

- Both head coaches shall not permit a game to begin or continue if the field and/or weather present a threat to the safety of the players.
- The presence of lightning or inclement weather shall result in the suspension of any game immediately at the discretion of the managers. The game or practice will not resume until the threat of lightning or inclement weather has subsided for at least 20 minutes.
- If a game is canceled, postponed, rained out, etc. it is the responsibility of the home team manager to notify the town representative immediately for rescheduling.
- Rainouts should be rescheduled within 3 days and played within 2 weeks. Both coaches should work directly with the home team town representative to reschedule rainouts.

### **Playing Field and Equipment**

- The playing field is an imaginary line from the backstop extended, running parallel to the 1st and 3rd base foul lines.
- Fair territory is the area bounded by home plate down each foul line.
- Distance between bases is 60 feet.
- The pitching rubber shall be 36 feet from home plate. A throw down rubber may be used for pitchers unable to throw it to the plate from that distance, but in no cases, should that distance be closer than 30 feet to home plate.
- The area behind the backstop is off limits to everyone.
- Only Little League bats up to maximum 2<sup>5/8</sup> inch barrel size are allowed. Bats must be USA stamped/approved. This does not include USSSA or BBCOR stamp/approval.
- Only level 5 balls (or its equivalent) are to be used at all times.

### **Team Requirements**

- A team must consist of 8 players to start a game.
- No out shall be recorded in the ninth batting position if only 8 players are present at a game.
- If more players arrive after the game begins they will be added to the end of the batting order.
- Teams without 8 players by 10 minutes past the scheduled start time shall forfeit the game. It is encouraged that a practice/fun game still be played to avoid having to make up the game at a later date.
- In no case may a player not registered with the appropriate town within the 302 League (the town they will walk-on for) play as a walk-on.
- Call-up players must wear the team uniform of their full-time team. A team cannot call up a player if that player's full-time team has a game scheduled at the same time. All call-up players must bat last and be limited to the Outfield.

### **Lineup/Playing Requirements**

- All players on the team will be placed in the batting order and bat. The same batting order will be maintained throughout the game.
- Coaches may substitute freely on defense.
- All players must play at least four innings if they are present at the start of the game. Each player must play at least two innings in the infield.
- No player can play more than 2 innings at one position per game.
- Courtesy runners for the catcher are to be used after 1 out.
- No player can sit on the bench for more than 2 innings.

- Any late arriving players will be added to the bottom of the batting order and announced to the opposing team.
- Head coaches should make sure that all players are rotated as equally as possible through outfield and infield positions throughout the course of the season. All players shall have multiple opportunities to pitch and catch throughout the course of the season.

### **Runs Scored/Innings**

- Innings are completed when 3 outs are made or a maximum of 5 runs are scored, whichever occurs first, except for the last inning of the game which shall follow the rules below.
- Final Inning Rules:
  - Head coaches shall discuss the time remaining after each full inning and agree in determining if an inning other than the 5<sup>th</sup> inning will be the final inning of that game prior to starting that inning.
  - Entering the final inning, if the visiting team is losing by 5 runs or less, they can score the standard maximum 5 runs in that inning.
  - Entering the final inning, if the visiting team is losing by more than 5 runs, they may score as many runs as possible until the score is tied (Example: score is 12-2, the visiting team can score 10 runs and the half inning is over). This means that a team that is losing by more than 5 runs cannot win the game but can play for a tie. In this case, the home team will bat with a chance to score 1 run and win the game.
  - Entering the final half inning, if the home team is losing by 5 runs or less, they can score the standard maximum 5 runs in that inning to end the game in a tie or score the number of runs needed until they win the game on a walk-off.
  - Entering the final half inning, if the home team is losing by more than 5 runs they may score as many runs as possible until the score is tied. This means that a team that is losing by more than 5 runs cannot win the game but can play for a tie.

### **Batting/Ball in Play/Base Running**

- On deck batter must be on same side of the plate as the batter.
- Any ball that hits the pitcher/coach is still in play. Every effort should be made by the coach/pitcher to get out of the way of a live ball.
- There is no advancing on overthrows, whether in or out of the playing field. The purpose of this rule is to not penalize players for attempting to make a play on a runner.
- On hits to the outfield (past the base paths between first and second bases and second and third bases), runners may advance at their own risk until the ball is controlled by a fielder and a throw is made toward the infield area. If the runner is less than halfway to the next base at the time of the throw, they are to be moved back to the previous base. If the runner is over halfway to the next base, they can advance at their own risk.
- No lead-offs are allowed.
- No stealing is allowed.
- No bunting is allowed.
- No drop third strike rule.
- No infield fly rule.
- Sliding: The base runner must slide to avoid contact when a play is pending. The offensive or defensive player that promotes avoidable contact will be ruled against. Sliding is always deemed as an attempt to avoid contact.
- Intentionally throwing equipment (helmets or bats) are grounds for dismissal from the game.
- Throwing bats: 1st time - team warning. 2nd time – batter will be called out.

## Defense

- Two coaches from the defensive team are allowed on the field.
- Each team is allowed 10 players defensively; the outfield consists of LF, LCF, RCF, RF (no short center).
- It is mandatory that ALL players wear appropriate protective gear (i.e. cup protection).
- Catchers must use full protective gear, including cup protection, while catching. The game will be forfeited if one team is unable to play a catcher that is properly protected.
- Catchers cannot intentionally block the whole plate without the ball. The runner must be given the opportunity to touch the base.
- A defensive player cannot intentionally impede a runner.
- The pitcher must be within 5 feet of the pitching rubber and to the opposite side of the batter.

## Pitching

- First 2 Games:
  - Coaches must pitch overhand to their own players and to the opposing catcher from the pitching rubber at 36 feet. Every effort should be made to be as close to the pitching rubber as possible. Pitching from the knee is allowed.
  - Players will be given 7 pitches to put the ball in play. One extra pitch per batter will be allowed if a pitch from the coach is unhittable and the opposing coach approves an 8<sup>th</sup> pitch.
  - The batter is out if they fail to put the ball in play within the 7 pitches. EXCEPTION: If the batter fouls their last pitch, they get another pitch. This continues until no contact is made.
- Starting Game 3:
  - Players will pitch innings 1-5.
  - Players will pitch 3 pitches to each opposing batter (batters are encouraged to swing at any close pitches).
  - If no contact is made after the 3 pitches, the coach will pitch the remaining 4 pitches of the at bat. The rule listed above is to be followed for a potential 5<sup>th</sup> coach pitch. If the final pitch is fouled off the batter continues until a pitch is not contacted.
  - Players are only permitted to pitch 1 inning per game.
  - A single pitch counts as a full inning for a player.
  - Coaches must be vigilant in looking for any fatigue from pitchers.
  - Pitchers shall throw no more than 30 pitches in their inning of work (and in a game/day). This should be the maximum number of pitches possible in any inning unless it is the last inning where a team down more than 5 is scoring more than the standard 5 runs in that inning to play for a tie. In this case, at least two pitchers must be used in the inning. At or before the 30 pitch mark is reached for the first pitcher a pitching change must be made.
  - NOTE: the main goal is to start to teach kids proper throwing mechanics
- Hit By Pitch Rule
  - If any pitcher hits any batters with a pitch a total of two times in an inning, the head coaches must discuss the circumstances and whether the pitcher should be allowed to continue to pitch that inning. NOTE: Some circumstances to consider are if the batter attempted to get out of the way, the speed of the pitch and if the batter was hurt in any way.
    - A hit by pitch is to be defined as a pitch thrown on a fly that hits a batter.
    - The coach shall complete the at bat for any batter that is hit by a pitch.

- o If after the conference between the head coaches, the pitcher is allowed to continue, a third hit by pitch in that inning requires that the pitcher is removed from pitching duties.
- o In the event that a pitcher is removed, the defensive team shall have the option of switching players to allow another player to pitch the rest of that inning or allowing the original pitcher to remain and play defense only. If the latter is chosen, the coach shall pitch 5 pitches to the remaining batters that inning with no extra pitches allowed unless a foul ball is hit on the final pitch as detailed above.

### **Coach Responsibilities**

- Sportsmanship with healthy competition is to be stressed. It is expected that coaches model the 302 League Code of Conduct at all practices and games. Coaches are to hold their parents accountable for their behavior at practices and games.
- The home team must provide 2 new game balls.
- Coaches meet prior to start of each game to discuss field of play rules and any field circumstances.
- Elburn and Maple Park: Home team is responsible for putting the bases, mound and any field equipment away if it is the last game of the day. They are also responsible for raking around the bases and mound after every game.
- Sugar Grove: Teams should leave the bases and mound as they are and do not need to rake around the bases and mound after every game.
- Coaches must ensure that trash in the dugout and around the field is cleaned up. The players should be encouraged to help.