

## 2026 AGALL Rookies Division Guidelines

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**The primary function of this division is introducing players to kid pitch for the first time while developing proper baseball fundamentals. Team records will be tracked for playoff purposes. Pitch counts should be tracked through the GameChanger App, but other statistics do not need to be tracked. This division is focused on growth and will maintain pace of play with some coach assistance.**

We will be following the current year Little League Baseball Official Regulations and Playing Rules book. It is an app that you download one time and will automatically update.

### **Team Rosters**

Each team will consist of 11-13 players League Age of 7 & 8 who are moving up from the Coach Pitch division. Players who are League Age 9 and new to baseball may request to join the Rookies division if the Competition Committee determines their experience and skill level would benefit them.

Players of League Age 7 & 8 may request to evaluate directly into the Minors division. As such, they would be subject to the evaluation process alongside other players at the Minors division (age 8 – 10), and placement would be based on the evaluation and draft process. It is not a guarantee that a request to play up will result in the child being drafted, and in that instance, the child would be rostered on a Rookies division team.

### **Regular Season Play**

The first 6 games will be for developmental purposes only and will be officially scored as a 0-0 tie. Wins and losses will not be tracked. Games 7-12 will be more competitive and used to base seeds for the playoffs. Rules will adjust slightly starting with game 7 to enhance the level of play into the playoffs. Seeding is based on the Win / Loss record of the last 6 games. Tiebreakers will be (head to head record, runs allowed, run differential (Scored – Allowed))

### **Safety Rules**

**All safety/disciplinary related issues will be reviewed by the AGALL Competition Committee and further penalties may be assessed at the discretion of the Committee. Offenders must appear before the Board of Directors to appeal any decision.**

#### **Catcher's Equipment:**

- Catchers must use a **catcher's mitt**.
- The catcher's helmet must have ear covers and the mask must have a dangling throat guard.
- Catchers must wear protective cups and approved chest protector.
- Catchers warming up pitchers must wear a protective cup and catchers helmet/mask.

#### **Manager/Coach Expectations:**

- A maximum of 4 coaches are allowed to be on the field or in the dugout at any time.
- Coaches will be permitted to be in the field of play as base coaches as well as behind the mound (for the purpose of umpiring).
- A coach may leave the dugout for an injured or ill player once time is granted by an umpire

#### **Player/Batter Expectations:**

- Players are not permitted in the doorway of the dugout or on the deck area.
- There is no such thing as an on-deck batting area or on-deck batter.
- Little League regulations prohibit any player from handling a bat or swinging a bat, even while in an enclosure until it's his/her turn to bat.
- While on-deck batters are not allowed, players can still prepare mentally by observing pitchers and practicing dry swings without a bat in hand.
- At the beginning of an inning or during a pitching change:
  - **ONLY** the leadoff batter or batter at the plate can come out onto the field with a bat to practice swing.

- o **NO OTHER PLAYERS** are allowed on the field with a bat to practice swing.

### **Throwing/Slamming of Equipment (Bats, Gloves, Baseballs, Hats, and Helmet)**

- Throwing or Slamming Equipment out of frustration will result in the following penalties:
  - o **First Offense** - Verbal Warning and **Mandatory** benching for next defensive inning.
  - o **Second Offense** - Automatic Ejection
- A batter inadvertently throwing a bat after hitting towards the catcher or umpire (whether it hits them or not) will result in the following penalties:
  - o **First Offense** – Team Warning
  - o **Subsequent Offenses** - Batter is **automatically out** and runners will return to previous base before the pitch occurred.

### **Spectator Expectations:**

- Spectators are to cheer for their team, not against their opponent.
- Spectators are not to engage with or confront an umpire regarding calls made (or lack of calls made) during the course of gameplay for any reason.
- Spectators are not permitted onto the field of play during the course of a game (barring injury at the discretion of the umpire and head coach).
- Spectators are not permitted inside the dugout during the course of a game.
- Spectators are never permitted to enter the dugout of an opposing team.
- Spectators deemed unruly, aggressive, or otherwise facilitating a negative baseball experience will face the following penalties:
  - o **First Offense** – the umpire will call a meeting at home plate with both head coaches. It will be confirmed which team the spectator is affiliated with. That coach will receive a final warning and be asked to address the spectator directly to correct the behavior.
  - o **Second Offense** – the spectator will be removed from the AGALL complex and will face further disciplinary action at the discretion of the AGALL Competition Committee. At the umpire's discretion, the game may proceed or the affiliated team may be forced to forfeit the game.

### **Pitching Rules**

- The Rookies division is in most instances a child's first experience with live kid pitch. As such, this league will give players the opportunity to experience pitching and gain confidence with a modified ruleset to keep the games moving.
- Each inning must begin with a new pitcher on the mound.
- For games 1-6, walks will not be permitted. If a pitcher reaches 4 balls, a coach will step in and pitch the at bat to completion (ball in play or strikeout). If the pitcher has not reached his pitch limit, they may resume throwing to the next batter.
- For games 6 and beyond, a maximum of 2 walks per inning are allowed. If a third batter or beyond would walk, a coach will step in and pitch the at bat to completion (ball in play or strikeout). If the pitcher has not reached his pitch limit, they may resume throwing to the next batter. A batter "hit by pitch" or safe on catcher's interference does not count towards the walk count.
- If a child reaches the maximum number of pitches in an inning, a coach will pitch for the remainder of the inning, with the pitcher remaining on the field near the mound for defensive purposes.
- **Pitchers League Age 6, 7, & 8**
  - o **Maximum Number of Pitches Per Game is 50 Pitches**
    - 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 must be observed.

### **Additional details:**

- If not specifically addressed in this rules supplement, Little League Rules apply. If a pitcher reaches and exceeds a pitch count threshold while finishing a batter, the pitcher will be deemed to have pitched to the lower threshold.
  - Example: Pitcher A starts pitching to a new batter while having already thrown 33 pitches. Pitcher A then throws 6 pitches to the new batter for a total of 39 pitches that day. For the purposes of rest, Pitcher A will need to comply with the 1-day rest policy, having started the last batter in the 21-35 pitch range. **Managers are responsible for noting the days of rest distinction while reporting those games' pitch counts to the Division Director.**
- A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher.
- If a catcher catches four (4) or more innings, they cannot pitch on that day.
- Catching one pitch in an inning constitutes a full inning at the catcher position.
- Coaches are permitted to warm up pitchers between innings and in the bullpen during the regular season.

### **Game Length**

Per Little League rules an official game is defined as 3.5 innings if the home team is winning and 4 innings if the visiting team is winning. If a **regular season/playoff game** is called due to darkness or weather and is not an official game it will be suspended. The game will resume at the exact point of the game where the game was suspended at a later date.

#### **Regular Season**

- Games will last six (6) innings or Two (2) Hour Drop Dead Time Limit, whichever comes first.
- No new inning may start after one hour and 45 minutes. If an inning starts before one hour and 45 minutes, the game will continue until the inning is completed. If the conclusion of the game would extend beyond the 2 hour hard cap, the game must conclude if there is a game immediately following on that field.
  1. If there is no game following and no darkness or weather considerations, the game should be played to the conclusion of that inning.
  2. Regular season games can end in a tie
- **Official time** will be kept by the head coaches for the regular season and umpires in the playoffs
- **ONLY** the head coaches (regular season) and umpires (playoffs) have the authority to end or stop a game for following reasons
  1. Mercy Rule (Team Mathematically Eliminated)
  2. No New Inning after 1:45 (one hour and 45 minutes)
  3. Darkness (Especially beginning of the season in March and April)
  4. Weather
    - For darkness and weather during the regular season, coaches must agree while keeping in mind player safety and the AGALL Code of Conduct

#### **Playoffs**

- Games will last six (6) innings or Two (2) Hour Drop Dead Time Limit, whichever comes first.
- No new inning may start after one hour and 45 minutes. If an inning starts before one hour and 45 minutes, the game will continue until the inning is completed
  - There is no 2 hour hard cap in the playoffs. The game will conclude when the top and bottom of the inning is complete and a clear winner is determined.
  - If the game must be stopped due to darkness or weather considerations, the game will be resumed from the exact point at the time the umpire suspends the game.
    - Score, batter/pitcher, pitch counts, batter count, and runners on base must be recorded and shared with the VP of Baseball.
    - These will be reconfirmed by the umpire with both coaches prior to play resuming.
- **Official time** will be kept by the umpire or League Assigned Game Director
- **ONLY** the Umpire or League Assigned Game Director have the authority to end or stop a game for following reasons
  1. Mercy Rule
  2. 1:45 (1hr 45 minutes) Time Limit reached during an inning

3. Darkness
  4. Weather
- Playoff games cannot end in a tie. If a game is tied after six (6) innings or once time limit reached after a full completed inning, the game will continue and the following applies:
    1. International Tie Breaker Rule - Runner placed on second base (last batter of previous inning) and no outs
    2. Gameplay will continue until a clear winner is determined

### **Championship Game**

- There will be no time limit established for the Championship game. It will be played to the completion of 6 innings or if the mercy rule is applied.

### **Game Play**

- No slash bunting, no advancing on dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strikes and no infield fly rule enforcement for the duration of the season.
- An inning is either three (3) outs or four (4) runs, whichever comes first.
- Player substitution is open; starters and substitutes are not linked in any way, except that a pitcher may not re-enter a game as a pitcher.
- For games 1-6, steals are NOT PERMITTED. Runners should focus on taking secondary leads and recognizing stolen base opportunities.
- For games 7-12 and playoffs, a maximum of 3 successful steals per inning will be permitted. Stealing home will not be permitted. A runner advancing on a passed ball will be considered a stolen base.
- Runners may not advance on overthrows from the catcher on throws to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> when the catcher is trying to defend a steal attempt. This is intended to encourage catchers to attempt to make a play on the runner.
- Runners may not advance on overthrows from the catcher to the pitcher.
- Runners may advance one base on an overthrow from the catcher on a reverse pick attempt.
- Runners may advance one base per overthrow from fielders on a ball put in play (i.e. overthrows to first). If the defense continues to attempt to make a play on a runner, the runner may not advance further.
- For situations where baserunners are at 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, when the runner at first attempts to steal and the catcher chooses to make a play on the advancing runner at 2<sup>nd</sup>, the runner at 3<sup>rd</sup> MAY NOT attempt to score as stealing home is not permitted at this level.
- In the event a runner steals a base over the quotas established in Rule 5, if the defense makes a play and the runner is ruled out, the out will count. Otherwise, the runner will be permitted to return to their previous base without defensive challenge.
- No delayed steals, which are defined as a runner attempting to steal a base after a catcher has secured the ball and is in the process of returning the ball to the pitcher.
- The ball is considered live until the pitcher has it their possession within the basepaths of the infield.
- Eight (8) players are required for an official game to start. The ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) spot will be skipped over until a player shows up to fill the spot.
- Outfielders must play at least 20 feet behind the base paths.
- Ties in the regular season are permitted.
- There is no unlimited last inning in either the regular season or the playoffs.

### **Mercy Rule**

The following mercy rules should be implemented once a team is mathematically eliminated from winning the game

- Nine (9) or more runs after 3.5 innings if home team is winning or 4 innings if visiting team is winning
- Five (5) or more runs after 4.5 innings if home team is winning or 5 innings if visiting team is winning

### **Courtesy Runners**

In order to speed up the game, with two outs, the catcher/pitcher may be removed from the bases for a courtesy runner.

- The player who made the last out at the plate should be inserted as the pinch runner.
- If last out was the **catcher/pitcher**, the courtesy runner would be the first batted out of the inning

- If both the pitcher and catcher are on base with two outs, the last out of the inning would run for either the catcher/pitcher and the first batted out would run for the other.

**NOTE:** Per Little League rules, the same runner cannot run for the pitcher and catcher in the same inning. If the last batted out runs for the pitcher in an inning with two outs and then the catcher reaches base later in the inning, the first batted out would run for the catcher since the second batted out already ran for the pitcher.

If a player is injured while running the bases, a courtesy runner may be used to replace the injured player. The courtesy runner is typically the player who made the last out for the team batting. The injured player **can return** to the game if they recover, but if they **are injured again** they are removed from the lineup for the remainder **of the game.**

### **Mandatory Play Rule**

All Minors players are required to play a minimum of Four **(4) innings** per game in the field (per defined by AGALL above) unless the game is shortened by

- Weather
- Darkness
- Mercy Rule

An inning is defined as 3 defensive outs or four (4) runs, whichever comes first.

Per League Little Rules, if a half inning ends because of the imposition of Four (4) run limit and a player on defensive has played for the entire half inning, that player will be considered to have participated in playing three (3) consecutive outs defensively

### **Continuous Batting Order**

**Continuous Batting Order (CBO)** means every player on a team's roster bats in a predetermined sequence which is determined before the game starts, regardless of whether they are currently playing in the field defensively. All players must be included in the batting order, and if a player arrives late, they will be added to the end of the order no matter where the team is in their batting order when that player arrives.

Flexibility of Defense means players can be substituted in and out of defensive positions without affecting the batting order

There is **no penalty** for missing a turn at bat which means if a player is injured, becomes ill, or must leave the game early. Their spot in the batting order is skipped without penalty. If they return, they are inserted back in their original spot in batting order.

If a batter is injured during their at-bat, the next batter in the lineup takes over, assuming the injured batter's count. If the injured cannot continue, their spot in the lineup will be skipped for the remainder of the game.

If a batter becomes a runner by reaching base safely and is unable to run due to injury, illness or ejection, he/she should be replaced by the player who record last out as a courtesy runner.

An injured player who leaves the game **cannot re-enter the game** even if the injury is not severe.

If a player arrives late to a game site, if the manager chooses to enter him/her in the lineup, he/she would be added to the end of the current lineup.

### **Sliding Rules**

Little League **does not have a mandatory "must slide"** rule for any base. While runners are not **required** to slide, they must attempt to avoid a collision with a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make a tag. If a runner doesn't slide or attempt to avoid a collision, and a fielder with the ball is present, the runner can be called out at the umpire's discretion.

On a close play, runners are expected to either slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball.

Head-first slides are **NOT ALLOWED** while advancing to base. A runner **is allowed** to slide head-first when **returning** to the base. Intentional versus inadvertent head-first slides (i.e. tripping) will be left to the discretion of the umpire.

Fielders **CANNOT** block a base without the ball. If they do, it's considered interference and the runner will be awarded the base.

### **Home / Away Dugouts**

Home Team will occupy 1<sup>st</sup> Base Dugout. Away Team will occupy 3<sup>rd</sup> Base Dugout.

### **Rain Out Games**

When the fields are deemed unplayable by the league due to weather, we will try to notify everyone by 4pm on weekdays and 8am on Saturdays that the complex is closed. Absent a full league and complex closure, both managers at the field decide rainouts.

Every effort should be made to get the game in. Decisions are made at the field unless a downpour occurs.

The rescheduling of make-up games (when possible) will be in partnership between the league and the impacted head coaches. Coaches should not reschedule games without the involvement of the league. On most days/evenings, the ballfields are fully utilized. The league will need to coordinate field availability to ensure you have a field open for your game/practice.

### **Official Games Suspended by Darkness or Weather**

Little League rules state that a game shortened by darkness or weather will revert to the previous completed inning. If the game is not official (enough innings played) we will need to schedule a time to continue the game. If the game has hit its official length it will be considered final

### **Game Results**

From game 7 onward, the Home team will send the final score of the game as well as all pitch counts to the VP of Baseball (vpbaseball.agall@gmail.com) after each game. It is a good practice to touch base with the opposing manager during the game (between innings) to make sure both teams are on the same page in terms of pitch counts for both teams.

After the game, the Home team manager or scorekeeper should confirm the Away team final pitch counts in order to send the email to the VP of Baseball later that night. The Away team manager should be copied on that email.

### **Field Usage Rules**

- The Home team is on the First Base side of the field; the Visiting team is on the Third Base side of the field.
- The Home team is responsible for prepping the field (chalk lines, batter's box and installation of bases). The Visiting team will drag the field after the game, rake and repair the mound and remove the bases.
- The home team will lead the Pledge of Allegiance; the Visiting team will lead the Little League Pledge.
- Each team is responsible for cleaning their dugout after the game.
- Each team will supply one game ball for the game.
- Protests or arguments with the umpires are prohibited.
- The equipment used by all players must be Little League approved.
- Players should refrain from throwing or mishandling equipment.

### **Tournament Player Nomination and Voting Process**

Refer to link on website under **Tournament Team Selection Process**

<http://www.avongrovelittleleague.com/>

### **Playoffs**

Playoffs will begin on or about **May 31<sup>st</sup>**, **depending on weather cancellations during the season**. All teams will make the playoffs with seeding determined by win/loss record for the second half of the season. A playoff format and schedule will be distributed later.

- The rules for playoff games are the same as the regular season rules with exception to the below:
- Playoff Ties at the end of regulation –
  - The seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) inning will be played as normal.
  - Starting in the top of the eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in the respective half inning being placed on second (2<sup>nd</sup>) base. EXAMPLE: If the number five (5) batter is the lead-off batter, the number four (4) batter in the batting order will be placed on second (2<sup>nd</sup>) base.
  - Play will continue until there is a clear winner.
  - If a game is tied and in extra innings and is called due to daylight or weather the game will continue at the next date available.

### **Assigning Umpires (Playoffs Only)**

The league will assign umpires for all Playoff games. In the event at least one umpire does not show, contact the Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) or VP of Baseball ([vpbaseball.agall@gmail.com](mailto:vpbaseball.agall@gmail.com)) at least 5 minutes prior to the start time of the game. If it is determined that the league assigned umpire will not be present, both managers must agree on a method of umpiring the game with the best interest playing the game in mind.

- If agreed upon by both managers, a parent umpire handling all the umpiring responsibilities from behind the mound for both teams or one parent from each team handling a half inning at time
- A Manager/Coach if agreed upon by both Managers can umpire from behind the mound while their team is batting per each half inning
- If agreed upon by both Managers, two parents. One parent from each team. One parent behind the plate in full gear assuming home plate umpiring duties and other parent umpiring bases and assuming the responsibilities of the base umpire for the whole game

### **Umpire Discussions (Playoffs Only)**

If a team would like to discuss a call made on the field, the head coach (**ONLY the head coach**) should call a time-out. When the plate umpire grants the time-out, the head coach should approach the plate umpire and have a polite conversation regarding the call that was made or the rule they believe may not have been properly applied.

- If a manager has a rule book question, the manager must show the plate umpire the rule in the rule book that he/she is questioning
- If a call made by the base umpire comes into question, the base umpire must request help from the home plate umpire for there to be a discussion regarding a call.
- **Any decision made by the umpire after review is final.** If a head coach still disagrees, they must communicate with the VP of Baseball ([vpbaseball.agall@gmail.com](mailto:vpbaseball.agall@gmail.com)), who will coordinate a review with the AGALL Competition Committee and the Umpire-in-Chief (UIC).