



Philosophy

The Boys A League is an instructional league for boys in 1st and 2nd grade. The goal of the league is to teach boys the fundamentals of the game, the value of sportsmanship, and the importance of teamwork. Most importantly, however is that the boys have fun while participating. The Boys A League uses a Progression-based baseball approach to the season. This approach introduces baseball fundamentals and progresses over the course of the season in three progression phases, Progression 1, Progression 2, and Progression 3.

Team Composition

A maximum of 10 players will play defense on the field. When roster sizes are more than 10 players, the team will utilize a bench and rotate players into the field every inning to ensure balanced playing time. No player should sit out more than one consecutive inning. When roster sizes are smaller than 10 players positions should be vacated by a player in the following fashion:

No. of Players	Positions
10	Play all standard infield positions and 4 outfield positions
9	Play all standard infield positions and 3 outfield positions
8	Play all standard infield positions, minus the catcher. A hitting team coach will play as catcher. Any plays at the plate will be ruled safe for the runner.
7	Play all standard infield positions, minus the catcher and minus either one infield or one outfield position at the coach's discretion.
6	If missing 50% of team notify Division Coordinator to cancel and/or reschedule

Arriving Late: Any player who arrives late will be added to the bottom of the batting order in the inning they arrived.

Coaches can agree prior to game on number of players on the field and swap players during P1 & P2. Teams should field a minimum of 9 players during P3 and player swapping is prohibited. Contact Division coordinator for exceptions.

Game Preparation

1. All players must wear the uniform issued by SLBYA for the season. The uniforms may not be altered in any way. Metal cleats are not allowed. No Jewelry, casts, braces, or splints shall be worn on the field.
2. The catcher must wear a protective helmet with face shield and will play at least 6 feet behind home plate. Protective cups are mandatory for catchers and strongly recommended for every other player.
3. Each team's equipment bag will contain batting helmets, and practice baseballs. Each bag has the key for the field box which contains bases, machine, sanitation supplies, and first aid kit.

Progression Based Baseball Season Format

The progression-based approach introduces basic baseball fundamentals over the first portion of the game playing season. Coaches are encouraged to look at Progression 1 & 2 games like scrimmage games. P2 games progress to introduce strike outs and speed gameplay for more innings of practice. P3 games introduce score keeping and recording outs. ***Each game ends with a base race relay competition in traditional SLYBA fashion all the way through the season.***

1st Progression (P1) – The first third of the season

The first games' scores are not kept. The batter receives machine pitch balls or coach pitch at coach discretion. Coach pitch must be overhand. Distance from batter coach discretion. Each batter will swing until a ball is put in play. The offensive team will bat all the way through the order. Runners put out on bases do leave the base and return to the dugout. Game play is expected to be slow and instructional.

2nd Progression (P2) – The middle third of the season

P2 games will not be scored but will progress to introduce that three swinging strikes is an out and use of machine pitch for all batters. The batter is limited to 7 hittable pitches (coach pitch permitted for final strike). If the 7th pitch is a foul, the batter is retired. The goal is to speed game play to prepare players for the final progression to three-out game play. The offensive team will bat all the way through the order.

3rd Progression (P3) – The final games

P3 games will progress closer to upper division baseball. (The league's second graders will progress to a league that is kid pitch, keeps score, has wins and losses next season. This progression is intended to get them prepared for the transition.) The 3rd progression eliminates the coach pitch option. After three swinging strikes the batter will be out. There are still no walks and no called strikes on the batter, the batter must swing to be charged a strike. Foul balls count as a strike, but don't retire a batter (swinging strike only). The half inning will end when the defensive records three outs or the hitting team hits through their entire lineup. Score is kept for these final 5 games. Coaches will report the game results to the division coordinator. These games will be used to determine seeding for the Super Saturday games. This is with the intention to matchup teams of similar skill for the final Super Saturday games. (Super Saturday is NOT a tournament.)

	1 st Progression	2 nd Progression	3 rd Progression
	First third of season	Middle third of season	Last third of season
Score Kept	No	No	Yes
Swinging Strikes counted	No	Yes	Yes
Batter hits from the machine	Coach option	Coach pitch last strike only (option)	Machine pitch only
When does the ½ inning end?	The hitting team bats its entire lineup	The hitting team bats its entire lineup	When defense records 3 outs or the hitting team bats its entire lineup, whatever comes first
Innings for a complete game (not to exceed 5)	2 innings	3 innings	4 innings
Lead offs and Stealing	No	No	No
Home Team Coaches in field	No limit	2 max	1 max

Game Length

1. Progressions 1 and 2 of the season. The length of the game shall be 1 hour and 15 minutes. The game clock starts with the first pitch being thrown. The official time keeper is the home team coach. The objective is to **complete 2 full innings of play**. Always complete an inning before the game ends. The home team will always have the last at bat of each game. Additional innings can be played within the time allowed with agreement from both team's coaches.
2. Progression 3 of the season. During these final games, a complete game is 4 innings. Once an inning has started, it must be finished, provided the home team is behind when it is their turn at bat. The length of a game will be capped at 1 hour 30 minutes. If the time limit is reached, that inning will be played to completion, but a new inning will not be started.

Game Rules

1. The home team will occupy the third base bench taking the field first, set-up machine (22 mph pitch), and provide bucket of balls.
2. Coaches play their players in several positions each game. Rotate your players around from inning to inning, **every player should play all positions during the season** to include infield and outfield every game. Players are prohibited from playing the same position more than once per game and they must be in the outfield at least once per game.
Exception: Players may opt out of the catcher position if they are not interested. Coaches must make sure players own a cup and have it on the days they are playing this position.
3. Coaches and their assistants are encouraged to join their players on the field while on defense. This is a great opportunity to provide situational instruction and to provide encouragement. See progression rules on number of coaches allowed on field.
4. There are no umpires at this level. The coaches in the field will rule on all plays. Integrity rules the day and these coaches are expected to make the most accurate call they can on whether a runner is safe or out.

5. Coaches on offense and defense will make umpire calls in field. Offense team encouraged to have a 1st and 3rd base coach to assist with base running and help with umpire calls. **Close calls should be ruled in favor of the runner.**
6. Base runners may advance any number of bases while the ball is in the outfield throughout the season. On fly balls to the outfield, a baserunner is allowed to “tag up” if the fly ball is caught and attempt to secure the next base at his own risk. Use conservative base running with coaches stopping runners if ball is under control in the infield.
 - a. Teach kids to get ball under control and not to just throw it around
 - b. One base on overthrows
7. The coach runs the machine or pitches to his/her own team while at bat.
8. The pitching coach and machine is considered part of the field and any ball that hits the coach is to be played and is live.
9. Balls are not counted during the entire season. There are no walks.
10. There will be no leading off or stealing. All runners must be in contact with their bases until the batter makes contact with the ball.
11. The base runner must stay in his baseline. The baseline is 3 feet on either side of the line established by the baserunner. If the baserunner leaves the baseline to avoid a tag during the final progression of the season he is out.
12. If a batter-runner or base runner is put out at a base, that base runner will leave the bases and return to the dugout.
13. Sliding is allowed. All sliding is to be feet first. No headfirst sliding is allowed. When sliding, the runner shall slide directly into the base. Players who slide first or into a player will be warned in P1 & P2 and called out in P3.
14. When the last batter hits for the hitting team any runs scored on the initial play count. When the fielding team gets the ball back to the catcher position (if playing short without a catcher, the pitcher shall cover down on the plate) all baserunners must stop at the last base secured and no further runs are scored for that ½ inning.
15. If a forced out is made on the last batter, no runs will be scored on that play. If the final out is not a forced out, all runs scored prior to the out will count.
16. The defensive players should be lined up in the standard defensive positions. The defensive pitcher must play behind the pitching machine and remain there until the ball is hit for safety reasons.

Bats / Game Ball

1. No current restrictions on bats.
2. Coach Pitch plays with standard league provided Reduced Impact and Flight Baseball.

Inclement Weather

1. The division coordinator will be responsible for canceling games prior to 4:30 p.m. The division coordinator will notify the coach from each team. The coaches are responsible for notifying each member of his/her team. After 4:30 pm the coaches will make a joint decision as to whether a game should be started or continued due to inclement weather. **At the first sign of lightning during a game, that game must be cancelled**, and all players moved to a safe location. Games are not played when lightning is in the area – NO EXCEPTIONS. Minimum of 30 minutes without lighting in area before re-starting a game.

2. For makeup games, the progression of the game will change to match up with the week it is rescheduled. For example, if a P1 game is rescheduled to a week where P2 games have begun, the makeup game changes to a P2 game. Therefore, it is possible to have more of one kind of progression in a single season.

Good Sportsmanship

Coaches will promote good sportsmanship at all times and will be examples for the players. The success of the format for this league relies heavily on the ***good conduct and sportsmanship of the adults teaching and coaching the game***. Report any incidents of unsportsmanlike conduct to the division coordinator immediately.

