

**2026 Virginia State Little League  
Coach Pitch Baseball and Softball  
Tournament Rules and Guidelines  
(Approved March 21, 2026)**

These 2026 Virginia State Coach Pitch Baseball and Softball tournament rules were approved by the District Administrators of Virginia on 21 March 2026. These supplemental rules are to be used in conjunction with the Official Little League Rule Book. The following options, rules and clarifications shall be used throughout the Virginia state and section tournament(s).

**1. Objective**

- 1.1 The objective of the Coach Pitch Tournament is to provide league age six-, seven- and eight-year-olds the opportunity to participate in a baseball (or softball) tournament at the District, Section, and State level. All players and coaches selected for a tournament team must come from **a regular season Coach Pitch Little League roster only**.
- 1.2 Each team will consist of a minimum of 10 players and no more than 14 players on a roster, a manager, 2 coaches and one pitcher coach. A game may not be played or continued if either team has less than 8 players.
- 1.3 **Managers and coaches shall be approved volunteers and must have completed the Diamond Leader Training Program, Abuse Awareness Training, and Concussion Awareness training. The Concussion in Sports certification must be from the National Federation of High Schools (<http://www.nfhslearn.com>).**

**2. Definition of Terms**

- 2.1 See Little League Official Rule Book.
  - 2.1.1. There will be a straight line extended **four (4')** feet on both sides of the 46 ft. pitcher's plate with a 10 foot radius circle for **baseball** (35 ft. with 8 foot radius circle for softball).
  - 2.2.1. Once the adult pitcher has control of the ball the defensive ~~coach~~ manager may ask for time out to make an appeal on the previous play or to get clarification on a rule.

**3. Game Preliminaries**

- 3.1 Both managers will meet with a tournament official to conduct the following:
  - 3.1.1 Coin toss to determine the home team or dugout. The winner of the toss has the choice. The home team shall occupy the first base line dugout, and the visiting team shall occupy the third base line dugout. No exceptions.
  - 3.1.2 Exchange lineups and provide a copy for the official scorekeeper.

- 3.2** The batter's box, foul lines and coaches' box will be marked as outlined in the Little League rule book.
- 3.2.1.** Hashed lines will be placed mid-way in the baselines between first and second base, second base and third base, and third base and home plate.
- 3.2.2.** A skinned/flat infield is preferred, e.g. no mound.
- 3.2.3.** Tournament balls will be regular season baseballs for Baseball and 11-inch regular season softballs for Softball.

#### **4. Starting and Ending a Game**

- 4.1** All teams must be ready to start on time. The home team will take their defensive positions and the first batter on the visiting team will take his/her place in the batter's box.
- 4.2** The defensive team will place 10 players on defense, 6 infielders and 4 outfielders. Outfielders must be positioned on the outfield grass.
- 4.3** The offensive team shall station 2 adult base coaches and one (1) adult pitcher. An adult coach shall remain in the dugout at all times.
- 4.4** Teams will play each game with a continuous batting order. The batting order shall be established prior to the start of the game. All players present at game time will be listed on the batting order. Any player arriving late shall be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- 4.5** Tournament Run Rule is in effect (Tournament Rule 12).
- 4.6** A half inning ends when one (1) of the following conditions occurs:
- a. the offensive team scores five (5) runs; or
  - b. the defensive team makes three (3) outs; or
  - c. the offensive team completes the batting order
- Note: there is no limit on runs in the 6<sup>th</sup> or subsequent innings.
- 4.7** Players may be entered and/or reentered into the game provided he/she meets the requirements of mandatory play (3 consecutive defensive outs).
- 4.8** The Infield fly rule is NOT in effect.
- 4.9** There is a 1 ½ hour time limit per game. An inning may not start once the time limit has been reached.
- 4.10** When the completion of 6 innings or the time limit has been reached, and the score is tied, starting in the top of the next 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 that respective half inning being placed on second base.

#### **5. Putting the Ball in Play**

- 5.1** When the umpire calls "Play Ball" the Coach Pitcher shall pitch the ball to the batter.
- 5.2** The ball becomes dead, and the umpire will call time when:
- 5.2.1** A player is injured. Any runner(s) who have crossed the halfway/hash marks shall be awarded the next base. (If a base runner is injured the last retired batter will replace the runner.)

**5.2.2** When the player pitcher has control of the ball with both feet inside the circle.

**5.3** Defensive time outs will be limited to 2 per game. Time outs due to injury do not count. However, coaching during an injury timeout is not allowed.

## **6. The Batter**

**6.1** Each batter will receive 5 pitches or 3 swinging strikes. If the last pitch is fouled, the batter will receive additional pitches until they strike out or put the ball in play.

**6.2** If the 5<sup>th</sup> pitch is missed or not swung at, the batter is out.

**6.3** Bunting is not allowed.

## **7. The Runner**

**7.1** Runners shall not lead off or steal bases.

**7.2** Runners must have one foot in contact with the base until the ball reaches the batter.

**7.3** Runners may advance a maximum of one (1) base on an overthrow (at risk). Note: runners may not advance on subsequent overthrows during the same play.

## **8. The Pitcher**

**8.1** The Player Pitcher.

**8.1.1** One of the 6 infielders must play the position of Player Pitcher.

**8.1.2** The Player Pitcher must stand with both feet behind the **four (4')** ft extension of the 46 ft (35 ft, for Softball) pitcher's plate and must remain in the circle until the ball is pitched. He/she is free to move once the ball is pitched.

**8.1.3** The player pitcher may wear a helmet with NOSCAE face mask. This is optional for all players on each team.

**8.2** The Coach Pitcher:

**8.2.1** The Coach Pitcher may speak to the batter until the pitch is thrown. Once the ball is put in play the Coach Pitcher shall leave the playing field in a direction that will not interfere with the play/ball and not return until the umpire has called time. If the Coach Pitcher fails to leave or in the judgement of the umpire interferes in any way, the batter is out.

**8.2.2** The Coach Pitcher must pitch overhanded (under handed for softball) to each player and must start the pitching motion from within the pitching circle.

- 8.2.3 The Coach Pitcher will apply the courtesy of making sure that the defensive team is in position before making a pitch. The batter will not receive any benefit from the Coach Pitcher doing this. The umpire, in his judgement, shall nullify any hit, return any runners that advance, and call a strike on the batter.
- 8.2.4 The Coach Pitcher is considered part of the field. If a batted or thrown ball unintentionally contacts the Coach Pitcher, the ball is live and in play.

## **9 Coaching Rules**

- 9.1 All coaches and managers are responsible for the actions of their spectators and fans.
- 9.2 There must be an adult coach in the dugout at all times.
- 9.3 When the ball is hit, the pitching coach must exit the field to the foul line in the opposite direction the ball is hit.
- 9.4 Coaches shall make every attempt not to interfere with play. If, in the umpire's judgement, an offensive coach intentionally interfered with a play, the penalty shall be one (1) out for the defense; if a defensive coach interfered, all baserunners shall advance one (1) base.

## **10. Protests**

- 10.1 Protests may only be made by the manager and should only be made when the manager believes a playing rule has been misinterpreted or misapplied. Judgement calls cannot be protested.
- 10.2 All protests must be made before the next pitch or play is made.
- 10.3 The District Administrator, Tournament Director or his/her designated representative will resolve the protest before the game resumes. (DO NOT CALL SOUTHERN REGION).
- 10.4 All decisions made by the tournament officials are final.

## **11. Conduct of Teams**

- 11.1 Tournament Directors will ensure that:
  - 11.1.1 Managers are responsible for the conduct of their teams upon arriving at the tournament site and until such time as they have left the tournament site.
  - 11.1.2 ANY MANAGER, COACH, PLAYER, or SPECTATOR EJECTED FROM A GAME SHALL NOT PARTICIPATE IN OR ATTEND THE NEXT GAME. The person ejected must leave the game and tournament site within 2 minutes or their team will forfeit the game.

## **12. Documentation**

**12.1** A Special Games Affidavit shall be used to determine player's eligibility. Documentation will consist of birth certificate (to be shown at time of affidavit approval, not maintained with affidavit) and medical release.

### **Clarification of rules:**

**There shall be no stealing of bases in Coach Pitch. (No attempts to advance on passed balls or return throws to the pitcher, regardless of who the catcher throws the ball to. However, the game will move faster if the ball is returned to the Coach Pitcher.**

**A batted ball is live until the Player Pitcher has control of the ball with both feet within the circle. Any baserunners that are beyond halfway to a base will advance to the next base. If a baserunner is less than halfway, then he/she returns to the previous base. Hashed lines will be placed mid-way in the baselines between first and second base, second base and third base, and third base and home plate to aid in player placement. Baserunner placement is a judgement call by the umpire.**