



**Key LLB 2026
Tournament Playing Rules
Sean Doherty, ADA
6/15/26**



Balls, Fields & SB Pitching Distances

- Baseballs: RS-T
- Softballs:
 - 12" – Majors & Up
 - 11" – 7-8 / 8-9-10

<https://www.littleleague.org/tournament-resources/approved-balls/>

- Fields: All fields are neutral
- Softball Pitching Distances by Age:
 - 8-10: 35'
 - 9-12: 40'
 - Jr & Sr: 43'

Bats



- Softball: 1.20 BPF
- Baseball:
 - Majors & Below: USA Baseball
 - Intermediate/Junior: USA Baseball or BBCOR
 - Senior: BBCOR



Bats/Equipment

- **Equipment inspection is Managers Responsibility – NOT Umpires**
- **Illegal Bat:**
 - No bat alterations are permitted
 - Pine tar is allowed on the handle of the bat only. Not permitted elsewhere or bat will be declared illegal & removed
 - Penalty for Illegal Bat:
 - Batter Out – Can accept play +
 - Batter & Manager Ejected
 - Minus one adult base coach for game
 - Manager removed from the tournament
- **Improper/Damaged Equipment not to be used (Examples):**
 - Choke knobs, choke-up assists, etc. are considered alterations.
 - Batting donuts
 - Catchers' skull caps (catchers masks with dangling throat guards are required)
 - Cracked helmets or missing ear guards/pads



Uncaught 3rd Strike

- 9-10-11 Tournaments & above: Applies
- 8-9-10 Tournament: Does NOT Apply
- District Only Tournaments:
 - Minors: Applies
 - 7-8 & 8-9: Does NOT Apply

Infield Fly Rule

- Applies to all divisions EXCEPT 7-8 Softball!



Base Runners

Leads While on Base

- Baseball: Rule 7.13 (Majors & below)
- Softball:
 - 9 thru Majors: on Ball Release
 - 8-10: Ball reaches batter

Courtesy Runner (N/A for Srs.)

- With two outs, a courtesy runner may be used for pitcher or catcher of record. Runner must be the player in the batting order who made the last out.
- If both pitcher and catcher are run for, the players making the last two outs are used, in order, starting from the player due up soonest who replaces the player closest to home.

Special Pinch Runner (7.14) – Srs. Only

- 2X in a game (once in an inning)
- Run for a player 1X/game
- Special Pinch Runner must not be in lineup



Pitching Rules - Baseball

- Regular Season pitch counts in effect; One pitch in an inning = a whole inning
- Player who caught 4 innings cannot pitch that day
- Player who caught 3 innings then throws 21 pitches* cannot catch for rest of the day (31 pitches for 15-16's)
- Pitchers removed from the mound:
 - Majors & below: Cannot return to the mound
 - Intermediate & up: Can return 1X if they remained in the game on defense
- Pitcher delivering 41* or more pitches cannot catch for the remainder of the day
- Cannot pitch on 3 consecutive days
- Pitching in > 1 game in a day:
 - Intermediate & below: not allowed
 - Junior & Seniors: Only if player throws 30* or less pitches in first game (Does not apply to Jrs. at age 12)
- Once per batter, team may request an “unpitched” intentional walk. Remaining pitches are added to pitch count.
- Consult LLB Pitching Rule Limits which are based on the players LLB BB Age

Note: * Threshold exception applies; can finish batter



Pitching Rules - Softball

▪ Majors & below:

- Pitchers removed from the mound & remaining in the game, can return as a pitcher anytime but only once in the same inning they were removed
- One pitch in an inning = a whole inning
- One calendar day between regular season & tournament
- No more than 12 innings in a day
- **Pitch < 7 innings: no rest needed; > 6 then 1 day of rest**
- If curfew/darkness/weather can pitch to limit of 12 innings on next day

▪ Junior/Seniors:

- There are no pitching inning, rest or consecutive day restrictions
- Juniors Only: Pitchers removed from the mound & remaining in the game, can return as a pitcher anytime but once in the same inning they were removed
- Seniors Only: Pitcher removed offensively or defensively can return as pitcher once per inning if no violation of:
 - Substitution rules
 - Visits to pitcher
 - Mandatory play



Visits

- Applies to pitchers who may return
- Go to Umpire before talking to or changing player = NO visit
- Otherwise, a visit is charged
- 8-9-10, District only 8-9 & Minors: 3 per inning / 4 per game
- All other LLB Tournaments: 2 per inning / 3 per game

Coaches Permitted

- 1 manager & 2 coaches regardless of roster size (7/8 BB & SB – 4 coaches are allowed – see rules)
- 1 Adult must always be in the dugout
- Cannot warm up pitchers for tournament play
- Must have completed the Little League Diamond Leader Training Program at least once (LittleLeague.org/DiamondLeader)



Tie Games

- Starting in 7th inning (8th Inning for Intermediate & up)
- Runner is placed on 2B
- Special Pinch Runner or eligible sub can be used for Seniors
- Last batter of the inning is runner (not last batted out)



Mandatory Play – Continuous Batting Order Juniors & Below

- All players on the team affidavit present at the start of the game, must appear in the batting order & are required to bat in his/her respective spot in the batting order.
- A player may be entered and/or re-entered defensively in the game at any time. Special rules apply to pitchers returning.
- If a player is injured, becomes ill, or must leave the game site after the start of the game, the team will skip over him/her when his/her time at bat comes up without penalty.
- If the injured, ill, or absent player returns, he/she is merely inserted into their original spot in the batting order and the game continues
- If a player arrives later 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
- If a player is unable to complete a plate appearance due to injury, illness or ejection, the next batter in the lineup shall take his/her place at the plate and assume the count of the original batter
- If a batter becomes a runner by reaching base safely and is unable to run the bases due to injury, illness, or ejection, he/she shall be replaced by the player who recorded the last out or with a Courtesy Runner if applicable
- An improper batter will be considered as batting out of turn (see Rule 6.07)



Mandatory Play – Continuous Batting Order Juniors & Below

- Managers are solely responsible for ensuring that all players fulfill the requirements of playing participation.
- The Tournament Committee reserves the right to impose penalties (including, but not limited to removal of the manager, forfeiture of a game, and/or disqualification of the team or coaches from further tournament participation) may be imposed if, in the opinion of the Tournament Committee:
 - If a manager or coach takes any action that results in making a travesty of the game, causing players to intentionally perform poorly for the purpose of extending or shortening a game, or;
 - A team fails to meet the requirements of this rule more than once during the International Tournament, which begins with District play and ends at the World Series level (State level for 8-to-10- and 9-to-11-Year-Old Divisions), or;
 - A manager willfully and knowingly disregards this rule.

For Senior League – see LLB rulebook - Mandatory Play does NOT apply!

7-8, 8-9 & Minors District Only Mandatory Defensive Play



- Every player in the line-up must play 6 defensive outs in the game.
- This does not have to be consecutive

Note: The District Only tournaments are provided for players NOT selected to the LLB International Tournaments



Run Rules (Mercy)

- 15 runs after losing team bats 3X (4X for Intermediate & up)
- 10 runs after losing team bats 4X (5X for Intermediate & up)

Note:

* 7-8 District Tournament follows different rules

** There is NO 8 run rule for tournament play

Misc.

Cannot make an agreement to follow local or any other rules



Use of Double First Base (Rule 7.15)

New to Tournament play last year. It is not mandatory below regionals & has been used over the years as a safety issue.

Key Rules if the additional first base is used:

- A batted ball that hits the orange (or green base) is foul
- Batted ball that hits the white base is fair
- If a play is being made on a batter runner, the white base must be used by the defense, and the batter runner must use the orange (or green) base
- Definition: A play is being made on the batter runner when he or she is attempting to reach first base while the defense is attempting to retire them at that base
- If, **when a play is being made on the runner**, the batter runner only touches the white base the batter runner may be called out on appeal
- On extra base hits and other balls hit to the outfield and no play is being made by the batter runner, the batter runner may touch either base. If the batter runner rounds and returns, they must return to the white base.
- Tag touches must be from the white base
- On pick offs, return must be to the white base
- On third strike not caught (UTS), defense may use either base, and the batter runner may run in fair territory if the ball is to foul side.
- There is no change in obstruction or interference rules.



Additional Rules

- Jewelry is permitted unless it will cause harm
- Neoprene sleeves are ok for pitcher & do not require covering unless white or gray in color
- Helmet stickers are permitted if they don't contain a reference to drugs, alcohol or tobacco
- One way communication devices can be used with catcher



7-8 Baseball Rules

Game play will follow Regular Season Minor League Rules, including these points of emphasis:

- 46-foot pitching distance
- A courtesy runner shall be allowed (but not required) for pitcher and/or catcher with two outs
- “Infield Fly” rule will be enforced
- Pitching rules as described in Little League Regulation IV
 - 6-8 year olds may pitch a maximum of 50 pitches per day
 - 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 day of rest is required
- Mandatory play requirement of six outs on defense which do not have to be played consecutively
- Modifications to Regular Season Minor League Rules to be used in the 8 Year Old Baseball Tournament
 - Games will be five innings
 - Games may not start with less than nine (9) regular rostered players. If a team drops to eight (8) players, they may borrow a defensive player from the opposing team. If during the game, a team drops below eight (8) players, that team shall concede defeat.
 - There will be a five-run limit per offensive half-inning for the first 4 innings
 - There will be a nine-run limit per offensive half-inning for the 5th inning
 - If the game is tied after five complete innings, the 6th inning shall be played as normal
 - If the game remains tied after six complete innings, the 7th inning, and each half-inning thereafter, will begin with a runner on second base
 - That runner will be the batter in the order who is furthest from batting in that half inning
 - There will be a five-run limit per offensive half-inning for all extra innings



7-8 Baseball Rules (Cont.)

- Mercy Rule will be 15 runs after three at-bats by the trailing team; and 10 runs after four at-bats
 - The game will end if the Visiting team goes ahead by 10 in the top of the 5th inning
- Teams will be allowed a total of four adults (one manager and three coaches) during games. One coach must be placed at the backstop to retrieve balls that get by the catcher while their team is on defense. This coach shall not provide instruction to players or comment in any way on balls and strikes
 - If the backstop is too close for a coach to safely stand, the requirement to place a coach at the backstop may be waived by the Tournament Director
- A continuous batting order shall be used in accordance with LL Tournament Rule #9
- “Stealing” bases is not permitted. Runners may only advance on a batted ball, or when forced due to base on balls, hit by pitch, or catcher’s interference
- Minor League rule 5.07 will NOT apply (When all players on the roster have batted in a half-inning)
- Runners may advance one base the first time the ball is “overthrown” into foul territory on a given play. Runners may be put out when attempting to advance. Runners may NOT advance on any subsequent overthrow regardless of being in fair or foul territory
- “Slash Bunting” is not permitted: Penalty – A team warning shall be issued for that game if the first violation is NOT put into play. A batter shall be called out if any slash bunt attempt is put into play or any subsequent attempts are made after the



7-8 Softball Rules

Game play will follow Regular Season Minor League Rules, including these points of emphasis:

- 35 foot pitching distance
- An 11-inch softball will be used
- Infield Fly rule will not be enforced
- Pitching rules as described in Little League Regulation IV
 - Maximum of 12 innings pitched per day
 - Pitching in 7 innings requires one day rest
 - One pitch counts as an inning
 - A pitcher who has been removed from the circle may re-enter as pitcher anytime in game, but only once per inning
- Mandatory play requirement of six outs on defense which do not have to be played consecutively
- Modifications to Regular Season Minor League Rules to be used in the 8 Year Old Baseball Tournament
 - Games will be five innings
 - Games may not start with less than nine (9) regular rostered players. If a team drops to eight (8) players, they may borrow a defensive player from the opposing team. If during the game, a team drops below eight (8) players, that team shall concede defeat.
 - There will be a four-run limit per offensive half-inning for the first 4 innings
 - There will be a nine-run limit per offensive half-inning for the 5th inning
 - If the game is tied after five complete innings:
 - The 6th inning, and each half-inning thereafter, will begin with a runner on second base
 - That runner will be the batter in the order who is furthest from batting in that half inning
 - There will be a four-run limit per offensive half-inning for all extra innings



7-8 Softball Rules (Cont.)

- Mercy Rule will be 15 runs after three at-bats by the trailing team; and 10 runs after four at-bats
 - The game will end if the Visiting team goes ahead by 10 in the top of the 5th inning
- Teams will be allowed a total of four adults (one manager and three coaches) during games. One coach must be placed at the backstop to retrieve balls that get by the catcher while their team is on defense. This coach shall not provide instruction to players or comment in any way on balls and strikes
 - If the backstop is too close for a coach to safely stand, the requirement to place a coach at the backstop may be waived by the Tournament Director
- A continuous batting order shall be used in accordance with LL Tournament Rule #9
- A Courtesy Runner can be used for the catcher and/or pitcher of record with two outs. Courtesy Runner shall be the player who made the last batted out
- “Stealing” bases is not permitted. Runners may only advance on a batted ball, or when forced due to base on balls, hit by pitch, or catcher’s interference
- Minor League rule 5.07 will NOT apply (When all players on the roster have batted in a half-inning)
- Runners may advance one base the first time the ball is “overthrown” into foul territory on a given play. Runners may be put out when attempting to advance. Runners may NOT advance on any subsequent overthrow regardless of being in fair or foul territory
- “Slash Bunting” is not permitted: Penalty – A team warning shall be issued for that game if the first violation is NOT put into play. A batter shall be called out if any slash bunt attempt is put into play or any subsequent attempts are made after the



Protests

- **Playing rule or improper substitution:** Must be made before next pitch, play or attempted play
- **Mandatory play:** As soon as the facts become known
- **Ineligible pitcher or player:** As soon as facts become known, but before either teams' next game
- Judgement calls are not grounds for a protest

Protest Chain of Command:

Umpire → Tournament Director → District Staff → East Region Staff → Tournament Committee