



Baseball Program Rules

Single A Division (8U)

Livingston Little League & Softball follows the official Little League rule book unless modified below. The rules listed below are to help clarify common questions, emphasize safety rules, or to establish a local league rule that varies from a Little League rule. These rules are designed to help the kids develop their baseball skills while having fun and enjoying the game. Safety and good sportsmanship are always the highest priority.

I. General League Rules:

1. All bats must be placed on a bat rack – no bats in the dugout.
2. All bats must have the USABat stamp. **USSSA and BBCOR bats are NOT permitted.** Coaches are responsible for ensuring compliance.
3. No shoes with metal cleats or metal spikes.
4. No one other than coaches with approved background checks are allowed on the field or in the dugout. No family or friends in the dugout.
5. A continuous batting order that includes all players on the team roster present for the game shall be used.
6. Every player must sit out once (except catcher) before another player on the team sits a second inning. No player sits more than 1 consecutive inning. No player sits more than 2 innings per game.

II. Game Format

1. Each team must have minimum of 8 players for an official game. The coaches can agree to play the game with less than 8 or lend players.
2. Home team occupies first base dugout.
3. During player pitch, each team must designate someone to track their own pitch counts.

4. Each game is 6 innings or 90 minutes (no new inning after 80 minutes). A game is official after at least 4 innings (3.5 innings if the home team is ahead).
5. A team may only score 5 runs max per inning, except the 6th which is unlimited.
6. Run Rule: if a team leads by 15 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, or 8 runs after 5 innings, the game will be declared over and will count as a regulation game. Teams can continue to play up to the time limit, with coach pitch only, with any additional runs not counting towards the game total.
7. Once the light goes on for darkness the game ends immediately.
8. If the inning is not complete when a game is called for time, weather, or darkness the score of last completed inning is the official score, unless the home team has taken the lead in the bottom half of the inning.
9. If game is called due to time, darkness, or weather before it is official, the game will be continued at a later date from where it left off.
10. Extra innings: "traditional" baseball rules. No runner placed on second base.

III. Rules of Play

1. No leading or stealing; runners leave the base on contact only.
2. On any overthrow during a live play, runners may advance at their own risk but are limited to **one additional base** beyond the base they were attempting at the time of the throw. For example, if a runner is going to 2nd when the overthrow occurs, they may attempt 3rd but not home.
3. Play stops when the ball is returned to the pitcher.
4. Runners between bases: runner returns or advances to closest base.
5. No bunting.
6. No infield fly rule.
7. Teams can have four outfielders (for a total of 10 in the field). Outfielders should be positioned at least 15 feet onto the outfield grass. No player should be positioned at the edge of the dirt right behind second base. Outfielders should not act as extra infielders.
8. No sliding head-first when a runner is attempting to reach the next base. Any player sliding head-first will be called out. A player in possession of a base may "dive back" to the same base to avoid being thrown out by a fielder making a play.

IV. **Pitching Format (Hybrid Coach/Player)**: this is a transitional year from all coach pitch to incorporating player pitch.

1. Innings 1, 2, 5 and 6 are full coach pitch.

- a. Coach pitches overhand from 33 feet.
- b. Batters get 5 pitches to hit the ball. The batter will be out after 3 swinging strikes or at the end of 5 pitches, whichever comes first. If the batter has not put the ball in play after 5 pitches, it is an out. **The 5th pitch is “swing or you are out”, regardless of pitch quality.**
 - i. Foul on pitch 5 continues the at-bat (standard baseball rules). In that case, the batter will remain at the plate until they either put the ball in play, swing and miss, or take a pitch without swinging.

2. Innings 3 and 4 are hybrid player/coach pitch (3-and-3 format).

- a. Kids pitch from 40 feet.
- b. Player throws maximum three (3) pitches to each batter. If the ball is not put in play or a strikeout has not occurred after 3 player pitches, the **hitting team coach**, positioned near the mound at the start of the inning, steps in to finish the at-bat (from 33 feet).
- c. Strike Carryover: The batter retains all strikes earned during the player-pitch segment. (e.g, if a kid throws 2 strikes, the coach enters with a 2-strike count).
- d. The coach delivers a maximum of **3 pitches**. The batter will be out after 3 coach pitches or 3 strikes (including the carryover from kid pitch), whichever comes first. Foul ball on the last coach pitch keeps the batter alive (standard baseball rules). In that case, the batter will remain at the plate until they either put the ball in play, swing and miss, or take a pitch without swinging.
- e. If a player-pitcher hits a batter the ball is dead. No base is awarded. The at-bat resumes with the coach pitching. (subject to “retained strikes” and 3 coach-pitch limit).
- f. If a player-pitcher hits two batters in a single inning, the coach should consider replacing them.
- g. No player pitches more than 1 inning per game.

3. Umpiring Innings 3 and 4

- a. The coach of the team at bat (the one on the field that takes over after 3 kid pitches) acts as the umpire for their own batters.
- b. Coaches must call a generous “developmental” strike zone to encourage swinging at hittable pitches and keep the game moving. **Any pitch from the armpits to the shins that is within a few inches inside/outside of the plate is a strike.** The hitting team coach is *required* to call this zone. No “balls” are called.

- i. Encourage players to “be a hitter” when calling a strike, e.g., *“Hey, that was too close to take, you have to protect the plate!”* or *“That was a great pitch, you have to swing at that next time.”* The goal is for the kids to take swings and put a ball in play.
4. Pitch counts (MLB Guidelines).
 - a. 50 pitches max per day (will not be reached under 3-3 format with 1 inning limit).
 - b. Rest Requirements: 1-20 pitches = 0 days | 21-35 = 1 day | 36-50 = 2 days (calendar days in between, not 24 hrs from last pitch).
 - c. A pitcher is allowed five (5) warm-up pitches when entering the game. Warm-ups do not count towards pitch counts.
5. Coach backstop: during coach pitch and kid pitch, the team in the field will have a coach backing up their catcher to retrieve passed balls, fouls tips and wild pitches to help keep the game moving.