

# **South Carolina Little League Coaches Pitch Baseball and Softball Tournament Rules and Guidelines**

These rules were approved for play by the District Administrators of South Carolina. These supplemental rules are to be used in conjunction with the Official Little League Rulebook. The following options, rules and clarifications shall be used throughout the tournament.

## **Objectives of the Coaches Pitch Division**

The objective of the Coaches Pitch Tournament is to provide six- and seven-year-olds as well as the eight year olds who have not been selected to an International Tournament Team, the opportunity to participate in a baseball or softball tournament at the District and State level. Leagues are strongly encouraged to place the maximum number of players on the Tournament Affidavit, thereby giving more players the opportunity to participate.

## **Responsibility and Chain of Command**

It should be clearly understood by League Presidents, managers, coaches, and parents that the Coaches Pitch Tournament is a “Special Games” tournament and is operated solely under the authority of the South Carolina Little League District Administrators and their appointed Tournament Directors. There will be no waivers or resorting to local rules or other variations unless approved the South Carolina Little League District Administrators Association (SCLLDAA)

The SCLLDAA also reserves the right to impose penalties, if, in its judgement, any player, manager, coach, umpires, or other volunteer conducts him/herself in any manner, on or off the field, that does not positively reflect the high standard Little League holds for sportsmanship, citizenship, and decorum. This includes displays of unsportsmanlike conduct, “making a travesty of the game,” or violating any rules, regulations, or policies contained herein during the game, at the game site, at any other location. The Association also reserves the right to impose any penalty the Association deems appropriate if the Association determines action is necessary to correct a situation brought to its attention, regardless of the source of that information.

## **Tournament Organization**

### **Teams**

Tournament teams and Eligibility Affidavit shall consist of a minimum of twelve (12) and a maximum of fourteen (14) players, one (1) manager, and a maximum of three (3) coaches of which one will be the adult coach pitcher.

### **Managers and Coaches**

The manager and coach(es) shall be regular season team managers and coaches from the Minor League Division. As a condition of eligibility for selection as a tournament team manager/coach must have completed the Little League Diamond Leader Training Program. This program must be completed prior to being named tournament team manager/coach and before participating in any practices or games.

### **League Eligibility**

In addition to the guidelines listed in the LL Rule Book leagues must have chartered Coaches Pitch through Little League International and played a Coaches Pitch or Machine Pitch season.

### **Player Eligibility**

Any player league age 6, 7, or 8 who has participated as required by Mandatory Play as an eligible player for the current season.

### **Playing Equipment**

The dimensions and other specifications of all playing equipment used must conform to those set forth by Little League Baseball and Softball except for as noted below:

- a. The catcher may wear a catcher's mitt or regular baseball glove.

## Conditions of Tournament Play

### Protests

No protest will be considered on a decision involving the umpire's judgment. (Swinging strikes, fair, foul, safe, or outs)

Protests may only be made by the team Manager and shall only be made when the Manager believes a rule has been misinterpreted or overlooked by the umpire.

The following steps must be taken:

1. A formal (verbal) protest must be made to the Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) at once.
2. The UIC must call a conference of all umpires.
3. If the protest is not resolved to the satisfaction of the manager, the UIC will consult with the Tournament Director or District Administrator. The decision of the Tournament Director or District Administrator shall be final and binding

### Appeals

There are two kinds of appeal.

1. Runner infraction- not tagging up or failing to touch a base,
2. Batting out of order or a checked swing.

The ball **does not** have to be "live" to make an appeal. As soon as the play is over, and the umpire has called "time" the Manager may approach the umpire and make his/her appeal.

All protests and appeals must be made before the next pitch is made.

## Tournament Playing Rules

1. **Fields** - The batter's box, foul lines, and coaches' boxes will be marked as outlined in the Little League rule book with the following modifications:
  - a. A chalk hash mark 1/2 way between (30ft.) 1st and 2nd bases, 1/2 way between (30ft.) 2nd and 3rd bases, and 1/2 way between (30ft.) 3rd and home plate will be marked for all games.
    1. The sole purpose of these lines is to help the umpires determine if a runner has completely crossed the halfway point between two bases at the time a dead ball is called.
  - b. A circle of 10 feet in diameter (5' Radius) will be marked off around the pitcher's mound with the center of the pitcher's plate to be used as the center of the circle.
  - c. BASEBALL – The pitching distance will be 46 feet.
  - d. SOFTBALL – The pitching distance will be 40 feet.
  - e. Outfield fences must be a maximum of 225 feet and a minimum of 180 feet.
  - f. Pitching mounds are not required.
  - g. A double first base is preferred but not required.
2. **Playing Rules:** A copy of these rules must be available at each tournament site and at the time the game is played. These rules will be reviewed with all managers and umpires at least ten (10) minutes before the start of the game.
  - a. An at-bat will consist of 6 pitches or 3 swinging strikes. If the 6th pitch is a foul ball the at-bat will continue.

- b. Bunting is NOT allowed. Any bunt attempt will be counted as one of the 6 pitches.
- c. There will be no walks.
- d. Batters must keep one foot in the batter's box during their at-bat. **Penalty – Ball is dead. 1<sup>st</sup> offense batter is warned. 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent offense a strike will be called.**
- e. When the 10th consecutive batter of the inning comes to the plate, the offensive team will automatically be recorded as having two (2) outs. Play will continue until the 3rd out is recorded or the 10th batter has scored. This rule will not apply in the 6th and any further innings of play.

Courtesy Runner: Teams may utilize a "courtesy runner" for the catcher when there are two (2) outs. Must be the player who made the last out.

- f. Stealing is not allowed. When the adult pitcher has the ball and is ready to pitch all runners shall be in contact with their bases and shall not leave their bases until the ball crosses the plate.
  - 1. Penalty- IMMEDIATE DEAD BALL. If a runner leaves the base before the ball crosses the plate, the umpire shall signal to indicate the violation at the time it occurs. The runner is out and removed from the base upon leaving the base early.
- g. Each team must have at least 10 players to start and finish the game. The defensive team shall place 10 players on defense. 6 infielders and 4 outfielders. Outfielders must be positioned on the outfield grass.
- h. The infield fly rule is not in effect.
- i. The ball becomes dead, and the umpire will call time when-
  - 1. A batted ball comes in contact with the pitcher coach. The batter shall be awarded first base and runner(s) may only advance if forced.
  - 2. The adult pitcher intentionally touches the ball or a player. The batter is out, and all runners will return to their previously occupied base.
  - 3. A thrown ball comes in contact with the pitcher coach, the ball is dead. Any runner(s) who have crossed the hash marks shall be awarded the base they were going. If the runner(s) have not crossed the hash marks, they will return to the last base occupied.
  - 4. A player injured. Any runner(s) who have crossed the hash marks shall be awarded the base they were going. If the runner(s) have not crossed the hash marks, they will return to the last base occupied. (NOTE: If a base runner is injured, the last retired batter will replace the runner.
  - 5. When the defense has control of the ball within the baselines and the player with the ball raises his/her hands and calls "time".
  - 6. Comment: When a runner stands off a base and "jukes" or "feints" back and forth, this is to be interpreted as "not attempting to advance" and "Time" shall be called.

### 3. Pitching Rules

#### a. Player Pitcher

- 1. One of the 6 infielders must play the position of Player pitcher.
- 2. The player pitcher must stand with at least one foot inside the pitcher's circle before the pitch is made. He/she is free to move once the ball is pitched.

#### b. The Coach Pitcher

- 1. The coach pitcher may speak to the batter until the ball is put in play or the batter is retired. The coach can only speak to a batter during a dead ball.

2. Once the ball is put in play the coach pitcher shall make every effort to move quickly move out of the playing area and not return until the umpire has called time.
    1. Penalty – 1st time will be a warning. Second and subsequent infractions the batter will be called out for coach pitcher interference.
  3. The coach pitcher must pitch over handed to each player and may pitch from any location within the pitching circle. (\* Within is defined as any part of the foot touching the line)
  4. (SOFTBALL) The coach pitcher must pitch under-handed to each player and may pitch from any location within the pitching circle. (\* Within is defined as any part of the foot touching the line)
  5. Both feet must be completely within the pitching circle at the beginning and the end of each pitch. (\* Within is defined as any part of the foot touching the line)
  6. The coach pitcher will apply the courtesy of making sure that the defensive team is in position before making a pitch. If the umpire determines that the coach pitcher fails to do so, the batting team will receive no benefit from the pitch and the umpire will call a strike on the batter. Any hit or base runner advances will be nullified.
4. **FORFEITS:** No game may be forfeited, or a team disqualified without the authorization of the South Carolina Little League District Administrators Association. Violations which may result in forfeiture or disqualification must be reported immediately to the District Administrators of the teams involved and the State Coordinator before further play takes place which would involve a team or teams affected by such action.
5. **BENCH/DUGOUT:** Only players, managers, and coaches listed on the affidavit shall occupy the dugout. Team parents and team scorekeepers are not authorized to be in the dugout.
6. **DEFENSIVE CONFERENCES:** When permission is granted by the umpire a manager or coach may come out once an inning to confer with any player(s).
7. **INJURY/ ILLNESS:** If a player is injured or becomes ill during a game, the decision of a doctor (if present) or medical personnel will be final as to whether the player may continue in the game.
8. **MANDATORY PLAY – CONTINUOUS BATTING ORDER:** All teams must use a continuous batting order that will include all players on the team affidavit present at the start of the game, to appear in the batting order. Each player is required to bat in his/her respective spot in the batting order.
  - a. A player may be entered and/or re-entered defensively in the game at any time.
  - b. 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. Also, 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.
  - c. An improper batter is considered a batting out of turn.
  - d. 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.
  - e. If a batter becomes a runner by reaching a 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.
  - f. There is no exception to this rule.
  - g. Managers are solely responsible for ensuring that all players fulfill the requirements of playing participation.
  - h. The SCDA 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 SCDA.

1. 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,
  2. a team fails to meet the requirements of this rule more than once during the Special Games Tournament, which begins with District play and ends at the State level.
  3. a manager willfully and knowingly disregards this rule.
9. **RUN RULE:** If at the end of three (3) innings, two and one-half innings if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of fifteen (15) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. If at the end of a regulation game one team has a lead of ten (10) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent.

NOTE 1: If the visiting team has a lead of fifteen (15) or ten (10) or more runs respectively, the home team must bat in its half of the inning.

NOTE 2: A game determined by the 15-run or 10-run rule, shall be considered a regulation game.

10. **REGULATION GAME:** Regulation games (when a winner can be determined) terminated because of weather, darkness, or curfew must be resumed if the visiting team ties the game or takes the lead in its half of the inning and the home team does not complete their at bat or take the lead in an incomplete inning. This does not apply to games suspended or delayed by weather that may still be resumed before darkness or curfew (as defined in Tournament Rules and Guidelines – Curfew) on the same day.
12. **TIE GAME:** When the completion of six innings and the score is tied, the following tiebreaker will be played to determine a winning team:
  - a. The seventh inning [Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior League: eighth inning] will be played as normal.
  - b. Starting in the top of the eighth 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.

EXAMPLE: If the number five batter is the lead-off batter, the number four batter in the batting order will be placed on second base. An eligible substitute or special pinch runner may be inserted for the runner.