



## 2024 Season - AAA Division Notable & Local Rules

**Official Game:** 6 innings or 1 hour, 40 minutes (whichever comes first) and the game can end in a tie score. For games played prior to **March 11, 2024**, the time limit is "drop dead". For games played on or after **March 11, 2024**, no new inning will begin after the time limit is reached. [LR, Rule 4.10(a) & (e) and Reg. VII(h)]

**Time Limit:** No new inning shall begin after the prescribed time limit. An inning is deemed to begin at the moment that the last out is made completing the preceding inning or the 5-run limit is imposed in the bottom half-inning. [LR, Reg. VII(h), and Rule 2.00 re Inning]

**“Drop Dead” Rule:** When the “drop dead” time limit is in effect, (games played prior to **March 11, 2024**), at the declared time limit the score of the game shall revert back to the end of the previous inning. However, if the home team is at bat when the “drop dead” time is reached and is winning the game, then the home team is declared the winner and the score at the time the game was called will be the final score. Any manager deemed by the umpire to be stalling to achieve an advantage in a “drop dead” game maybe subject to disciplinary action by the Executive Board. All pitches thrown in a “drop dead” game count against the pitch count regardless if they were thrown in a “discounted” inning. [LR]

**Mercy Rule:** Does not apply during regular season games.\* [LR and Rule 4.10(e) Note 2]

**Batting:** Continuous batting order that includes all players present for the game. [Rule 4.04 Note 1]

**5 Run Rule:** Maximum 5 runs per half inning during the first 4 innings of the game.\* No run maximum thereafter. [LR and Rule 5.07]

**Strike Zone:** The regulation strike zone as stated in Majors, but expanded by the diameter of one ball on each side of the plate and the diameter of one ball higher and lower than the regulation strike zone when the batter assumes a natural stance. The umpire shall determine the strike zone according to the batter’s usual stance when the batter swings at a pitch. [LR and Rule 2.00 re Strike Zone]

**Min. Playing Time:** No player shall sit out defensively more than 1 inning consecutively unless due to injury. [LR] A player must sit for an entire inning to be considered as having sat out an inning. For all games played up to and on **3/30/2024**, no player may play more than 2 innings at a position. For all games played on or after **3/31/2024**, including makeup games, the limit is 3 innings. (For the purpose of this rule specifically, playing a position for even one pitch will count as having played an entire inning at that position.) No player can sit for 2 innings until everyone on the team has sat 1 full inning.\* *Pitcher Exceptions:* Once early season pitching limits are lifted (See: “Pitcher/Catcher Restrictions” document), a pitcher is limited only by pitch count, and may continue to play the pitcher position regardless of innings pitched. Further, if the starting pitcher is still pitching and he/she is the last player needed to sit before other players can sit their second time, that pitcher does not need to sit as long as he/she remains the pitcher. However, once that starting pitcher is removed from the mound and it is his/her turn to sit or his/her turn has been bypassed,

he/she must sit the next full inning unless it is the sixth inning, then he/she must sit the remainder of that inning and a player who is sitting his/her second time must take a position in the field. [LR]

Each player must play at least 2 full innings in the infield in the first 4 innings of a game. [LR]. If 13 roster players are present, then each must play 2 full infield innings in the first 5 innings. *Pitcher Exception:* Once early season pitching limits are lifted (See: “Pitcher/Catcher Restrictions” document), it may be impossible to give all players present 2 full infield innings during the game’s first 4 innings if the pitcher, now limited only by pitch count, pitches more than 2 innings. In this instance, managers are permitted to play 1 or 2 players (as necessary) only 1 full inning in the infield in the first 4 innings. However, players whose infield time is adversely impacted by this situation should not be impacted in future games a second time, until all players on the roster have been impacted once. [LR]

**Int. Walks:** Not permitted. [LR]

**Infield Fly Rule:** In effect. [Rule 2.00 re Infield Fly, 6.05(d) & (k)]

**Tagging Up:** Permitted.

**Stealing:** Permitted, except for home base for a portion of the season. See further explanation below. No leadoffs. [LR and Rule 7.13]

**Bunting:** Permitted.

**Min. Players:** 9 players are needed to start a game [Rule 1.01 and 4.16], 6 of which must be from the team. [LR] Up to 3 players may be called up from the AA division to make 10. [LR] Pool Player Rules apply. [LR] If a game cannot be started within 10 minutes from the time the home plate umpire declares the game is to begin (which can be no earlier than the scheduled time unless agreed to by both managers) because either team is unable to place 9 players on the field, the game is officially a forfeit. The game will still be played as a practice game. [LR and Rule 4.16] If during a game either team is unable to place 9 players on the field, the game is officially a forfeit. A forfeit will be counted as a 6-0 result in the standings. [LR]

**Scorekeeping:** The home team will act as official scorekeeper, designating a volunteer or volunteers to track game action and pitch count. Scorebooks and pitch count sheets will be made available at the snack shop, and both should be returned promptly following games. If there is a discrepancy between the scorekeeper's scorebook and the umpire's, the umpire's score prevails. The visiting team is responsible for operating the scoreboard for the entire game, designating either an adult or teenager to do so. [LR]

**Protesting:** No games may be played under protest. A call by an umpire may be protested but must be resolved before the next pitch. A protest shall be considered only when based on the violation or interpretation of a playing rule, use of an ineligible pitcher or the use of an ineligible player. No protest shall be considered on a decision involving an umpire's judgment. Only the manager (or acting manager if manager is absent) shall have the right to protest. The home plate umpire's ruling on the protested call is the final ruling for the game. [Rule 4.19(g)]

## Pitching

- For all games played up to and on 3/23/2024, pitchers will be limited to 2 innings. If a pitcher enters an inning in relief and throws 12 or fewer pitches, it will not count towards the 2 inning limit. For all games played on or after 3/24/2024, pitchers are limited by pitch count.
- A pitcher may only wear glasses (including sunglasses) if they are prescription glasses. [LR]
- Any part of the pitcher's undershirt exposed to view shall be of a solid color, but can't be white. Nor shall a pitcher wear any items on his/her hands, wrists or arms, which may be distracting to the batter. [Rule 1.11(a)]
- The front edge of the pitcher's plate shall be 42 feet from the rear point of home plate. This applies to using a temporary pitcher's plate when AAA games are played on the Minors field. [LR]
- If a pitcher hits 3 batters in one game, he/she must be removed as a pitcher for the rest of that game. [LR]
- A manager or coach may come out twice in one inning to visit with the pitcher, but the second time out the player must be removed as the pitcher. [Rule 8.06(a)]
- A manager or coach may come out two times in one game to visit with the pitcher, but the third time out in the game, the player must be removed as the pitcher. [Rule 8.06(b)]
- The number of visits resets when a new pitcher is brought into the game.
- The scorekeepers for each team are responsible for keeping track of the pitch count for all pitchers that pitch in a game. After each half-inning both scorekeepers shall verify the pitch count for each pitcher with each other. If there is a discrepancy the home team scorer's pitch count prevails. [LR]

## Bats

- All non-wood bats must have the USA Baseball insignia and cannot be more than two and five eighths (2 5/8) inches in diameter.
- If an illegal bat is used in a game, the bat must be removed from the game.
- A batter is out for illegal action when he enters the batter's box with an illegal bat or is discovered having used an illegal bat prior to the next player entering the batter's box. If the infraction is discovered before the next player enters the batter's box, the opposing manager may either take the out or accept the result of the play. [Rule 6.06d]
- For the first violation, the offensive team will lose one eligible adult base coach for the duration of the game. For the second violation, the manager of the team will be ejected from the game.
- Any subsequent violation will result in the newly designated manager being ejected. If a team is caught using an illegal bat for a second time during the season, the manager will be immediately ejected from the game, and may be subject to further discipline by the Executive Board.

## Offense

- **Runners Advancing:** A runner is allowed to advance at his/her own risk to the next base until the ball is controlled by the pitcher in the dirt area of the pitching mound, or otherwise ruled dead by the umpire. If a runner attempts to take that next base while the ball is controlled by the pitcher in the dirt area of the pitching mound, the runner will be sent back to the previous base.
- **Stealing Home:** For all games played up to and on 3/30/2024 home plate is closed and runners on any base may NOT advance home on a passed ball, wild pitch, or on any attempt by a catcher to throw out a runner attempting to steal second or third base or leading off of any base. If a player attempts to advance home and is tagged out, he is out. In addition, any other runner that advances while the player attempts to advance home shall be required to return to the base he/she started at. Runners may advance home under any other circumstances. For all games played after 3/30/2024 this restriction is lifted and home plate is open.
- **Walks, Passed Balls, Steals:** For all games played up to and on 3/30/2024, baserunners may only advance one base on a walk, passed ball, or a steal attempt. After 3/30/2024, a baserunner may continue to advance at their own risk while the ball is live.

- ***Errant throws from Catcher to Pitcher after a pitch:*** A baserunner may not advance on an errant throwback from the catcher to the pitcher. The runner(s) will either be tagged out or sent back to his base, and no other runner may advance.
- ***Delayed Steals:*** Not allowed. After a pitch, no runner may attempt a steal if the catcher is clearly in the act of throwing the ball back to the pitcher. The ball is dead when a pitcher receives the ball back from the catcher while the pitcher is on the dirt area of the mound. Runners must return to their bases, and the pitcher may not attempt to pick off a runner.
- ***Fake Steals:*** Not allowed. A runner attempting to steal must do so in one continuous run. He may not stop or delay in order to either a) draw a throw to help a different baserunner advance; or b) draw an errant throw to the base to which he is advancing. The runner will either be tagged out or returned to the base he started from.
- ***Runner Leaving Early:*** A baserunner attempting to steal a base before the ball has crossed the plate will be sent back to his base and incur a warning from the umpire. Thereafter, any baserunner from the offending team will be called out for the same violation. (The opposing coach may instead choose the result of the play). The same applies to a baserunner illegally leading off.
- ***Courtesy Runner:*** No courtesy runners are allowed (except for injured players).
- ***Sliding:*** A runner is out when the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder that has the ball and is waiting to make the tag. However, a runner does not have to slide/attempt to get around a fielder unless the fielder has the ball and is attempting a tag on the runner. There is no “must slide rule”. [Rule 7.08(a)(3)] A runner is out when the runner slides head first while advancing, but is not out if sliding head first back to a base he has already occupied. [Rule 7.08(a)(4)]
- ***Batter hit on hands:*** A batter hit by a pitch on the hands is awarded first base as he would be if it struck any other part of his body. It is only a foul ball if the batter attempts to swing at the pitch or his hands were in the strike zone. [2.00e]
- A ***Ground Rule Double*** will be awarded if a ball is hit fair and rolls into foul territory past the outfield fence, on the AAA field. [LR]
- ***Throwing bat:*** If a batter throws the bat in a manner deemed dangerous by the umpire, that batter shall not be called out but shall be given a warning to cease such bat throwing. The umpire shall also give a warning to that batter’s entire team upon this first infraction. However, for the remainder of that game, any batter from that same team that throws a bat deemed dangerous by the umpire shall be called out. [LR]
- ***Injured Player:*** If a player is injured in the field, and is due up to bat in the following inning, his spot is skipped over without penalty. However, if the injury occurs during that player’s at bat, then the player who made the last out will bat for the injured player assuming the count when the original batter was injured. [LR] If a player is injured while on the base paths, the player who made the last out shall replace the injured player. [LR]
- ***Arriving Late / Leaving Early:*** A player arriving after the start of the game must be inserted last in the batting order, even if the team has not batted through the lineup. Any player leaving a game after the first pitch shall not be recorded as an out when his spot comes up in the batting order. If this player returns, he is inserted into his original spot in the batting order without penalty. [Rule 4.04 Note 2]

## Defense

- 10 players shall play in the field defensively if the team has at least ten players. 4 of those shall be outfielders. [LR]
- All outfielders must play at least 15 feet behind the infield dirt. This is the defensive manager’s responsibility. The umpire shall enforce the outfield grass distance. [LR]
- If a defensive player blocks a base or base line clearly without possession of the ball, obstruction shall be called. The runner is safe and a delayed dead ball shall be called. For example, the catcher is not allowed to block home plate without the ball. [Rule 7.06(b)]

### Manager/Coaches

- A manager and not more than 3 coaches are allowed on the field (dugout) during a game. [LR & Rule 1.01, 3.15 & 3.17]
- Only the manager may talk to the umpires. Managers and coaches may not argue or question an umpire's call but the manager may ask for time to discuss a rule or protest a call. [LR and Rule 4.19]
- There must always be at least one adult in the dugout at all times.
- Players, coaches and the manager may not have food or gum in the dugout or on the field at any time. Sunflower seeds, bottled water or sports drinks are allowed. It is the manager and coaches' responsibility to enforce this rule. [LR]
- Managers or coaches are permitted to warm up a pitcher at home plate or in the bullpen or elsewhere at any time including in-game warm-up, pre-game warm-up, and in other instances. They may also stand by to observe a pitcher during warm-up in the bullpen. [Rule 3.09]
- If a team wants to hold a post-game meeting, it must be held off the field so the next teams can take the field. [LR]
- Managers must be sure that the correct final score is in the official scorebook and the managers must sign the official scorebook and Pitch Count Summary after each game. [LR]
- Both managers must submit the final score by e-mail to [\(email address to come\)](#) within 24 hours of the game. The opposing manager should be cc'd. [LR]
- Managers are required to follow the minimum playing time rules. If a manager fails to follow the rules, a first offense will result in a warning from the league. Further offenses will result in a one-game suspension. [LR]
- Violations of the playing time rules should be reported to the Division Representative (Division Rep). The Division Rep and Executive Board will have discretion to determine the nature of the offense and issue a warning or suspension as prescribed above. [LR]

### Safety

- All safety measures and protocols related to COVID-19 transmission issued by SOLL must be followed by all players and coaches at all times. [LR]
- A face cage or a jaw/cheek protector (C-Flap) is required on all batting helmets. [LR] (Note: SOLL recommends the use of face cages over C-Flaps, as cages provide full face protection.)
- Only official coaches and players are allowed in the dugout. No siblings, batboys/girls, etc.
- During a game, all catchers must wear chest protectors with neck collar, "dangling" type throat guard, shin guards and catcher's helmet. When warming-up a pitcher between half-innings, the player must wear a mask, "dangling" type throat guard and catcher's helmet. [Rule 1.17]
- Players must not wear jewelry *such as, but not limited to, rings, watches, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, nor any hard cosmetic/decorative items.* (**EXCEPTION:** Jewelry that alerts medical personnel to a specific condition is permissible.) [Rule 1.11(j)]
- The on-deck position is not permitted outside the dugout. Also, only the first batter of each half-inning will be permitted outside the dugout between half-innings. [Rule 1.08]
- No player (including the on-deck hitter) may have a bat in his/her hand unless it is his/her turn to bat. [LR]
- No hitting sticks or the like may be used to warm up the first batter while outside the dugout between half-innings. [LR]
- Only the on-deck hitter may sit in the uncovered area of the dugout, and that player must wear a helmet. All other players must stay under the covered portion of the dugout. [LR]

### Sportsmanship

- Players who throw equipment in anger, including bats, helmets and gloves, are subject to warning and/or ejection, at the sole discretion of the umpire. A first offense results in a warning to the entire offending player's team. A second offense, by any player on the warned team, may result in that second offender being ejected from the game. [LR]



### **Field Maintenance**

- The home team manager shall be responsible for ensuring that the field is ready for play at the scheduled start of the game. This includes, but not limited to, dragging and watering the infield, installing (or removing) temporary pitcher's rubber, and chalking the batter's box & foul lines. [LR]
- The visiting team manager shall be responsible for general field clean-up after the game, including dragging and watering the infield. [LR]
- These rules apply even if subsequent games will be played on the field that day. [LR]
- At the conclusion of the game, the manager is responsible for cleaning and vacating the dugout immediately, and to make sure that the bleachers are clean for the next game. [LR]
- The managers of the day's final game are responsible for emptying in-field trash cans into the main dumpsters. [LR]
- Both managers are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the facilities are locked and secured at the end of the last game of the day. [LR]
- Should a team be found in repeated violation of this rule, the Executive board shall have the right to impose appropriate action upon the violating team such as suspending practice times. [LR]

Any Rule or Regulation not discussed above is governed by this year's Little League Official Regulations and Playing Rules.

### **AAA PLAYOFF RULES**

#### **TIME LIMIT**

The prescribed time limit will apply to all playoff games except the Championship Game(s). An inning is deemed to begin at the moment that the last out is made completing the preceding inning or the 5-run limit is imposed in the bottom half-inning.

#### **EXTRA INNINGS**

No ties allowed in playoffs. Games may go beyond six innings to break the tie.

#### **MERCY RULE**

The Mercy Rule applies to all playoff games. 10 runs after 3 ½ (home is leading) or 4 (visitor is leading) innings.

#### **5-RUN RULE**

In the playoffs, only the first 3 innings are subject to the 5-run rule. No run maximum thereafter.

#### **MINIMUM PLAYING TIME**

1. The rule regarding "every player having to sit out one inning before any player sits a second inning" is lifted for the playoffs.
2. Each player must play at least one inning in the infield in the first four innings of the game, and two innings in a six-inning game.
3. In an extra inning playoff game, the three-inning-at-a-position limit is lifted beginning with the seventh inning. However, all pitching and catching restrictions still apply.

#### **POOL PLAYERS**

No pool players are allowed during the playoffs.