

2026 Season - Minors Division Notable & Local Rules

Official Game

6 innings, time limit, or mercy rule (whichever comes first) and the game can end in a tie score.

Time Limit

For games played *prior to March 4, 2026*, the time limit is 1 hour, 45 minutes "drop dead".

For games played *on or after March 4, 2026*, no new inning shall begin after 1 hour and 50 minutes.

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.

“Drop Dead” Rule

When the “drop dead” time limit is in effect (games *prior* to March 4, 2025), at the declared time limit the score shall revert back to the end of the previous inning.

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.

All pitches thrown in a “drop dead” game count against the pitch count regardless if they were thrown in a “discounted” inning.

5 Run Rule

Maximum 5 runs per half inning during the first 3 innings of the game. No run maximum thereafter.

Mercy Rule

10 runs after 4 innings (or 3 ½ if the home team is leading).

Batting

Continuous batting order that includes all players present for the game.

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.

Minimum Playing Time

No player shall sit out defensively more than 1 inning consecutively unless due to injury. Additionally, no player can sit for 2 innings until everyone on the team has sat 1 full inning. This rule will not be enforced if it would require the starting pitcher to be removed from the game before the pitcher has exceeded his/her maximum pitch limitations for the game.

All players must play at least 1 full inning in the infield in the first 4 innings of a game and at least 2 full innings in the infield in a six inning game.

No player may play more than 3 innings at a position except for pitcher (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)

An inning for minimum playing time purposes is a *full defensive inning* (i.e., 3 outs on defense). No player shall switch positions in the middle of an inning unless either due to injury or a pitching change.

Intentional Walks

Not permitted.

Infield Fly Rule

In effect.

Tagging Up/Stealing/Bunting

All permitted but no leadoffs when stealing. Delayed steals, fake steals, and steals of home are all allowed.

Minimum Players

9 players are needed to start a game, 6 of which must be from the team. 3 players may be borrowed from the AAA division (through the Player Agent) to make 9. Pool Player Rules apply.

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. If during a game either team is unable to place 9 players on the field, the game is officially a forfeit. The game will be continued as a practice game. A win by forfeit shall be recorded in the standings as a 6-0 victory.

In the playoffs, 9 players are still needed to start a game, but if a team should drop below 9 during the game due to injury or illness, the game will continue, with an out being recorded each time the missing player(s)' spot in the lineup is reached.

Scorekeeping

The home team will act as official scorekeeper, designating a volunteer or volunteers to track game action and pitch count. The Gamechanger app will be used to track scores and pitch count. If there is a discrepancy between the scorekeeper's record and the umpire's, the umpire's record prevails. The visiting team is responsible for operating the scoreboard for the entire game.

Protests

Protests are allowed. 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 play 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.

Catching Restrictions

A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play catcher for the remainder of that day. (Threshold Rule applies, see below.)

Any player who has caught for even one inning (or partial inning), and then pitches 21 or more pitches, may not return to playing catcher that day. (Threshold Rule applies, see below.)

Pitching Restrictions

1. Once removed from the mound, a player cannot return as a pitcher.
2. A player may not pitch in more than one game in a day.
3. For pitching restrictions in Suspended Games, see Suspended Game Rules
4. A player who has played catcher for 4 or more innings in a day (even if any of those innings were partial innings) may not pitch for the remainder of the day – applies to extra innings, doubleheaders, suspended games, etc.

Early Season Pitching Restrictions

The following refers to SCHEDULED GAMES, not necessarily games played. If any of these early games are rained out, then the restrictions will NOT apply if/when the game is made up (unless the makeup game takes place within the timeframe the restrictions apply):

1. For all games played up to and on **March 3, 2026**, pitchers will be limited to 2 innings.
2. For all games played on or after **March 4, 2026**, pitchers are limited by pitch count.

Regular Season Pitch Counts

Below are the standard Little League pitch counts limits that are applied by a player's "league age", regardless of SOLL Division:

11-12: 85 pitches

9-10: 75 pitches

7-8: 50 pitches

Exception: If a pitcher reaches his/her limit while facing a batter, the pitcher may finish out the at-bat. (Applies to all games)

Days of Rest Requirements

- 66 or more pitches in a day, (4) days of rest needed. (i.e. pitched on Saturday, may pitch on Thursday)
- 51-65 pitches in a day, (3) calendar days of rest needed. (i.e. pitched on Saturday, may pitch on Wednesday)
- 36-50 pitches in a day, (2) calendar days of rest needed. (i.e. pitched on Saturday, may pitch on Tuesday)
- 21-35 pitches in a day, (1) calendar day of rest needed. (i.e. pitched on Saturday, may pitch on Monday)
- 1-20 pitches in a day, he/she may pitch the next day. (i.e. pitched on Saturday, may pitch on Sunday)

NOTE: Under no circumstances shall a player pitch in three (3) consecutive days.

Threshold Rule

If a player begins pitching to a batter while below a particular "days of rest" threshold, but in finishing that batter's at-bat, exceeds that "days of rest" threshold, the pitcher only needs to observe the days of rest required by the number of pitches he had thrown when the at-bat began.

Example: Johnny has pitched 33 pitches. He strikes out the next batter on 3 pitches, pushing his pitch count to 36, and is then removed as pitcher. Since he started pitching to his final batter within the 21-35 threshold, he only needs 1 calendar day of rest.

The Threshold Rule also applies to pitch count restrictions regarding catching eligibility.

Example: Johnny plays the position of catcher in the first inning, and then pitches in the second. If Johnny reaches the 20-pitch limit while facing a batter, he may continue to pitch, and maintain his eligibility to return to the catcher position, until the end of the at-bat.

Pitching Rules

A pitcher may only wear glasses (including sunglasses) if they are prescription glasses.

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.

If a pitcher hits 3 batters in one game, he/she must be removed as a pitcher for the rest of that game.

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.

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. The number of visits resets when a new pitcher is brought into the game.

Bats

All non-wood bats must have the USA Baseball insignia to be used during practice and games. Such bats shall not be more than thirty-three (33) inches in length nor more than two and five eighths ($2 \frac{5}{8}$) 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.

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

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”. 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.

Dropped 3rd Strike: There is no dropped 3rd strike. The batter is deemed out even if the third strike is dropped.

Overrunning First: A batter who overruns first base and turns into the field of play instead of away, is not automatically out if tagged. It is up to the umpire to decide if the player was making an attempt to advance to second base.

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.

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.

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.

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. If a player is injured while on the base paths, the player who made the last out shall replace the injured player.

Courtesy Runner: No courtesy runners are allowed (except for injured players).

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.

Defense

There shall be 9 defensive players.

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.

Manager/Coaches

A manager and not more than 2 coaches are allowed on the field (dugout) during a game.

There must always be at least one adult in the dugout at all times.

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/the game.

Players, coaches and the manager may not have food or gum in the dugout or on the field at any time. Only bottled water and sports drinks are allowed. It is the manager and coaches' responsibility to enforce this rule.

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.

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.

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. 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.

Safety

Face cages are optional, not required.

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.

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.)

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.

No player (including the on-deck hitter) may have a bat in his/her hand unless it is his/her turn to bat.

No hitting sticks or the like may be used to warm up the first batter while outside the dugout between half-innings.

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.

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.

Field Maintenance

The home team manager is responsible for ensuring that the field is ready for play at the scheduled start of the game. This includes, but is not limited to, dragging and watering the infield, and chalking the batter's box and foul lines.

The visiting team manager is responsible for general field clean-up after the game, including dragging and watering the infield.

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.

The managers of the day's final game are responsible for emptying in-field trash cans into the main dumpsters and ensuring that the facilities are locked and secured at the end of the last game of the day.

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