

Yucaipa Valley American Little League 2026 Farm League Local Ground Rules

The Board of Directors from the American League considers the **primary goal** of the Farm League program to be instructional and the managers and coaches are expected to teach players the fundamental skills of Little League Baseball. A higher priority shall be given to achieving this goal than to winning games.

Yucaipa Valley American Little League considers SAFETY TO BE A PRIORITY. As such we expect all managers, coaches, and volunteers to follow the rules as stated:

- No on-deck circle will be allowed.
- No players climbing on fences or dugouts.
- A batting helmet **MUST** be worn by any player that has a bat in their hand.
- A supporter (for boys) **MUST** be worn in order to participate in games or practices.
- A catcher's mask with a throat protector, chest protector, shin guards, and a hard cup (for boys) **MUST** be worn while in the catcher's position.
- Head first slides while advancing into any base are not allowed, and the player will be called out after the head first slide.
- There must be an approved coach or volunteer in the dugout with the players at ALL times.
- Any manager, coach or volunteer that is in the dugout or on the field for the team, shall give their **UNDIVIDED** attention to the players of the game (i.e. NO scorekeeping, emails, or texting by these individuals).
- No smoking, vaping or alcohol use permitted while on YVALL premises.

Age Restriction: The Farm Division will be played by players league age 6-8, with exceptions, based on board approval.

The Board of Directors from the American League has determined that the Farm League Division will play its season in accordance with the official playing rules of Little League Baseball Rules and Regulations 2026, subject to the following additions and amendments:

- 1) For the first half of the season, all players are required to play an equal amount of time in the outfield and the infield in each game. This is to ensure all players play a variety of positions during each game. For the second half of the season, all players are required to play a minimum of 2 innings in the infield. Defensive substitutions and re-entry are allowed at every position throughout the game. However, player's skills develop at different rates and some positions are more hazardous than others.
 - a) **If there is a safety issue making the above rule hazardous, the parents and Farm Representative and/or Safety Officer must be notified in writing on a weekly basis until the player is no longer a safety issue. If this notification is given to the same player for 2 or more weeks, then a representative of the Board shall assess the player's ability and determine if the player is truly a**

safety issue to play all positions in the infield. It is the manager's ultimate responsibility to coach these players and help them improve their playing abilities so that they do not remain in the outfield for the entire season.

- i. If a manager or coach fails to comply with the above rule, those player(s) that did not get minimum play in the infield must play the next game that they are present for entirely in the infield.
- ii. If a manager or coach fails to comply with the above rule on more than one occurrence then they shall be sent to the Discipline Board.

2) Offensive team's at bat:

- a) The batting order shall be all the players on the team roster present for the game, batting in order, throughout the game. **A Continuous order will be utilized for the entire season.**
 - i. The batting order is static for the entire "regular" season: once it is set for the first game, it will remain throughout the season.
 - ii. The batting order may be changed after the regular season has ended and prior to the End of Season Tournament.
 - iii. The first batter of the game shall be the batter who immediately followed the batter who had their last at bat in the previous game.
 - iv. This will allow for an equal number of plate appearances throughout the season.
 - v. **Managers are required to submit their line up to the Farm league representative prior to the first game played. League Representatives will provide a copy of each team's line ups to all other managers prior to the start of the second game.**
 - vi. If a player(s) is not at the game, skip their spot in the batting order for the one game they are not there and write their name at the bottom of the lineup card as "absent." When the player returns to the next game, they will assume their same spot in the continuous batting order that was established for the first game of the season.
 - vii. There is no on-deck circle.
- b) The batter will be given no more than 5 pitches except if on the last pitch:
 - i. The batter hits it foul; they will continue their at bat.
 - ii. The ball is pitched as follows, and the batter does not swing, they will continue their at bat:
 - iii. In the dirt
 - iv. In either batter box
 - v. Above the batter's head
- c) The batter can strike out, either by swinging or pitch count of five (5) is reached. Strikes will be called if the player swings and misses.
- d) Tee-ball bats will be allowed to be used in this Division only in the first half of the season. The bat must be a Little League approved bat. Managers and coaches should encourage parents to purchase Division approved bats at the beginning of the season.
- e) **The batter will not be allowed to walk, unless hit by a pitch.** If the player is unable to take the base due to injury, then a pinch runner may be used.

- f) The base runners are not allowed to steal bases. The Runner must remain on the base until the ball is hit. There is no leading off.
- g) The base runners are allowed to slide into all bases, but sliding into first base is highly discouraged. Head first slides into any base while advancing are not allowed, and the player will be called out after a head first slide.
- h) Pinch Runners are not permitted, except in the case of an injury or a courtesy runner can be used for the catcher when the catcher reaches base and there are 2 outs or if the catcher is on base and the inning reaches the 2 out mark.
 - i. The pinch runner will be the last player to record an out, whether the out was made as a batter or as a runner, or if the player in front of the catcher in the batting order is not on base they can act as the pinch runner.
- i) The batter is not allowed to bunt.
- j) The offensive team's time "at bat" ceases when:
 - i. Three (3) offensive players have been legally put out
 - ii. When five (5) runs have been scored, or
 - iii. All players on the roster have had one (1) opportunity to bat in the inning. Managers are required to inform the Umpire and opposing manager when it is their last batters turn. At that time the number of outs automatically goes to two (2) and the inning is over when:
 - (1) A legal out is made
 - (2) The ball is in the possession (held in the glove with both hands) of a player located:
 - (a) Within (inside) the base line Home-2nd& 1st-3rd "Diamond"
 - (b) On or over each base, including home plate
- k) A Maximum of three (3) Adult Managers and Coaches are allowed on the field. One (1) each at 1st & 3rd Base and one (1) to operate the pitching machine. One (1) additional approved volunteer or coach must be in the dugout with players at ALL times.

NO UMPIRE or UMPIRE SETS UP BEHIND PITCHING MACHINE: one additional approved volunteer from either team will be allowed to stand near the back stop to collect the pitched balls to assist with moving the game along. **That approved volunteer should not be talking or coaching the players unless there is a safety concern.**

- l) **Bats shall not be thrown;** One (1) warning will be issued to the player and manager. If the batter repeats the behavior, the player will be called out. If the batter repeats the behavior a third time, then the player will be ejected from the game.
- 3) Defensive team:
- a) Each team should attempt to field ten (10) players, six (6) on the infield and four (4) in the outfield.
 - i. The player designated as the pitcher may play on either side of the infield and must be positioned behind either a chalked or imaginary line that shall

go approximately 5 feet from both sides of the pitching machine towards 1st and 3rd base and no further back than the back of the designated pitching circle. The player will not cross these lines until the ball is struck by the batter. This is a pitcher's position, consisting of all of the area behind the lines and extending back until parallel to the back of the pitcher's mound. There are no rover's allowed. A pitcher cannot cover any other area except the pitching position prior to the ball being struck by the batter. This will ensure players understand the correct placement of positions and how to cover those positions.

- ii. The outfielders will be positioned in an umbrella style in the outfield grass in an outfield position, i.e.: equal distance between Left, Left Center, Right Center & Right fielders - **NO ROVER POSITIONS ARE ALLOWED.**
 - iii. **Players may not rotate positions in the field during their team's half inning in the field, unless there is an injury. The positions are static for each half inning of defensive play.**
 - iv. The catcher must wear all of the catcher's gear; this includes shin guards, chest protectors, helmet/facemask (with a separate/additional throat protector) & appropriate supporter and hard cup at all times. They must be able to hold their position behind the plate and not move or duck/flinch in such a manner as to potentially get hit in an unprotected area by a pitched ball or foul tip. The Umpire has the right to ensure that the player in the catcher's position will be safe or will ask that a substitution be made.
- b) A ball is considered dead and all play stops when any of the following take place:
- i. The ball is in the possession (held in the glove with both hands) of an infield position player located:
 - (1) Inside of the infield diamond (the Base Path), or
 - (2) On or over each base, including home plate
 - (3) **** Note: If the player with the ball attempts to make another play, then the ball remains live. The batter is only allowed to advance one base per overthrow. When the play is called dead by the umpire, the base runners will be positioned as follows; if a base runner is halfway or more to the next base, they are awarded that base. If they are less than half way, they will be required to return to the previous base. This is a judgment call by the umpire and shall be final.**
 - ii. When the catcher is returning the ball to the pitcher, all play is dead and no runners may advance.
 - iii. If a ball goes out of play by an overthrow, runners will advance one base only. A runner may not attempt to entice an overthrow error in order to advance. One runner per inning may advance home from third base due to an overthrow error. Subsequent runners will remain at third base until driven home by a hit, a walk, or other non-overthrow error.
 - iv. The 10-foot diameter circle (centered on the pitching rubber) around the pitching machine is considered a "Dead Zone" and can be pictured as a column extending up into the air.

- (1) If a batted ball hits or is obstructed by any object/coach in the dead zone or comes to rest in the dead zone, the batter will be awarded first base. No other runners will advance, unless forced after the batter is awarded first base.
 - (2) At no time shall a defensive player cross / enter / reach into the Dead Zone column to field a batted or thrown ball. Managers and Coaches will make every effort to ensure the safety of the players around the pitching machine.
 - (3) The Dead Zone will not be used by a player to stop a play under any circumstances, unless the Dead Zone is involved in the play. If this occurs, the manager and player will be given a warning. If the umpire feels this is done under malice, then the runners will be able to advance one (1) base. If this happens under malice a second time during a game by the same player or another player, then the manager and/or coach(es) involved will be sent to the Disciplinary Committee for possible disciplinary action.
- c) A maximum of two (2) Managers / coaches are allowed on the field during defensive play for the first half of the season. One (1) approved volunteer or coach must be in the dugout with players at ALL times.
- 4) Field markers (Cones)
- a) Cones will be placed 150 feet from home plate
 - i. Home Runs – A ball must fly over, touched or untouched, and land on the other side of the cones to be considered a Home Run.
 - ii. Ground Rule Double – A ball must roll or bounce (touch or untouched) past the cones to be considered a Ground Rule Double and runners advance two bases. Outfielders are to raise both arms **only after** the ball rolls past the cones.
- 5) General Information
- a) This is an instructional division; however, in an effort to prepare players, teams and spectators for the next level, Official Scorekeeping will be kept for the second-half of the season. Home teams will be responsible for the official score. It is recommended that scorekeepers start at the beginning of the season for practice and understanding for the second half of the season (when it is mandatory).
 - b) Should a team have insufficient players to field a team; the opposing team will provide the other team player(s) to play defensively. It is recommended that these players be the last batters scheduled to hit in the inning. **No games will be canceled due to insufficient players.**
 - c) Time Limit: The umpire will record the official start time of the game. No new inning can begin after 1 hour and 15 minutes. (Inning will consist of 3 outs, one time through the batting order for the first half of the season, or after 5 runs have scored for the second half of the season). An inning begins the moment the 3rd out is made completing the preceding inning.

NOTE: If the Umpire determines that a Manager is purposefully delaying the game in order to artificially reach the 1 hour 15 minutes mark, disciplinary action may be taken against the Manager by the Board's Disciplinary Committee.

- d) Pitching Machines:
 - i. The pitching machines are to be set up directly over the center of the pitching rubber.
 - ii. Each machine will be marked with the league approved speed setting (40 mph).
 - iii. Both managers should review and agree that the machine is properly set up and at the appropriate speed and alignment prior to the start of the game.
 - (1) Adjustments to the height and location may be made during the game, but the coach/manager using the pitching machine may only check the location of a pitch without it counting against the batter's pitch count **one time during each half inning.**
 - (2) No adjustments in speed will be allowed during the game.
 - (3) In order to keep the game moving along, multiple pitches may be made before the ball(s) are returned to the operator of the machine if the batter has not made contact with a ball. The more time players are playing during the game (versus waiting on coaches), the more opportunities there are to improve their skills.
 - e) A standard Level 1 Little League baseball shall be used for the season, as a Level 1 leather baseball works best in the pitching machine.
- 6) Umpires will generally be young teens and are in training.
- a) If one Umpire is present, they will only call the following:
 - i. Balls & Strikes
 - ii. Fair & Foul
 - iii. Safe & Out – at Home Plate (Only)
 - b) In the absence of a second Umpire; the Adult Manager or Coach operating the pitching machine will call the following:
 - i. Safe & Out – at 1st, 2nd & 3rd
 - ii. Home Run & Ground Rule Doubles
 - iii. When play stops (Dead Ball) See Rule 3.b
 - iv. At NO time shall a manager or coach undermine the authority or ruling of an umpire.**
 - c) During the second half of the season, Umpires will make all calls.
 - d) No protests will be allowed.

Managers and coaches are expected to act as adults and in a professional manner. Should a manager wish to conference with the umpire, he will only do so by asking first and then meeting with the Umpire and opposing manager near the pitching machine. The observation should be pointed out in a quiet, calm and respectful manner. Remember, these are young men & women learning to become better umpires.

- 7) If, in the Umpire's judgment, playing conditions are unsafe, the game shall be called and the score will revert back to the previous full inning.

- 8) The home team is responsible for setting up the field of play. The visiting team is to take down the field. When setting up the field, please use the designated bases for the specific field you are using (the field number matches the number on the bottom of the bases). During an interleague game, the team playing on their home field is responsible for set-up and clean up.
- 9) Each team shall be responsible for cleaning up any/all trash in their dugouts and in the stands before leaving the field.

10) "15-run rule" – If after three (3) innings or 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. The game will be called, but the teams can continue to play until the time limit is reached for extra practice.

"10-run rule" – If after four (4) innings or three and one-half innings if the home team is ahead, 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. The game will be called, but the teams can continue to play until the time limit is reached for extra practice.

"8-run rule" – If after five (5) innings or four and one-half innings if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of eight (8) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. The game will be called, but the teams can continue to play until the time limit is reached for extra practice.

- 11) At the end of the season, there will be a **double-elimination tournament** that all teams will participate in.
 - a) The rules will be the same as the second-half of the season, with the following exceptions:
 - i. Players will have no minimum play in the infield.
 - ii. Managers may change their lineup once prior to the beginning of the tournament (but after regular season ends).
 - (1) This new lineup will need to be submitted to the Farm Representative prior to the tournament beginning. The Farm Representative shall forward all lineups to all teams prior to games commencing.
 - b) Teams will be seeded according to their win/loss record for the second half of the season only.
 - c) In the event of an "if necessary" game due to both teams having one loss, the home/visitor team will be determined by a coin toss (Board Member present) 1 hour prior to the final game.

Manager/Coaches/Umpires & Players should conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner at all times and shall promote sportsmanship and a sense of fair play at all times. Conduct to the contrary will not be tolerated in any form.