

West Deptford Little League Spring 2026

Minors Softball Rules



LEAGUE RULES:

- No parents/family members are allowed on the field or in the dugout.
- When players are in the dugout, a coach must also be in there to supervise.
- Teams must remove all belongings and trash before leaving the field after a game/practice.
- The home team grooms and lines the field for games and the away team grooms the field post-game.

GAME STRUCTURE RULES:

- Regulation Game: 6 innings.
- Official Game: Considered "regulation" if 4 innings have been completed (or 3.5 if the home team is winning).
- Run Limits: Most Minor divisions implement a 5-run limit per half-inning. Once 5 runs score, the teams switch regardless of the number of outs (this rule is often lifted in the 6th inning).
- The "Run Rule" (Mercy Rule): A game ends if one team leads by:
 - 15 runs after 3 innings.
 - 10 runs after 4 innings.
 - 8 runs after 5 innings (newly emphasized for regular seasons).

LINEUP:

- All players are put in the batting lineup
- Ten (10) traditional positions in the field
- Each Player is required to play two (2) innings in the field and bat at least once per game.

OFFENSE:

- All player bats must meet USA Softball standards set by Little League.
- Walks & Hit Batsmen are awarded first base.
- Balks are not introduced at the Minors level
- The side will be retired and the half inning over when one of the following conditions has been met:
 - Three (3) outs have been recorded
 - The offense has scored four (4) runs
 - If a team has three (3) runs already in an inning and the batter drives in more than one run with a ball put in play, the additional runs shall also count.

- Ten (10) run rule is in effect after four (4) complete innings. Teams may continue to play beyond the run rule at the coaches and umpire's discretion
- The infield fly rule is in effect
- Slide or Avoid Rule: Base runners are required to slide directly into a base, when a play is being made on them (except to avoid contact or when advancing from home to first) or if they choose not to slide then they must make an effort to avoid contact with the player making the play on them or leave the base path. If the base runner does not slide and contact with the defensive player results, the base runner will be declared OUT. If in the view of the umpire, this contact hindered the fielder from completing a second play, the umpire can call the second play an automatic OUT. If the contact with the defensive player is made with force, ruled by the umpire to be dangerous or un-sportsman-like, the umpire can remove the offensive player for the remainder of the game.

BASERUNNING:

- Leading Off: Not allowed. Runners must keep contact with the base until the ball is released by the pitcher (or until it reaches the batter, depending on the specific age sub-bracket).
- Stealing: Stealing is permitted once the ball is live/released. However, many local leagues restrict stealing home to encourage catchers to throw to the bases without fear of losing a run.
- Head-First Slides: Prohibited when advancing to a base (runner is called out). Head-first slides are only allowed when returning to a base they already occupied.

NOTE: If a runner tries to advance when not permitted and is tagged out, the out is recorded and the runner returns to the dugout. If the runner safely advances, he will return to the appropriate base after the play is over.

PITCHING:

Pitching rules are clearly defined by Little League International and are not modified by WDLL.

- Pitching Limits: A player may pitch a maximum of 12 innings per day. If a player pitches 7 or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest is required.
- Delivery: Underhand motion.
- Dropped Third Strike: In the Minor Division, the "Dropped Third Strike" rule is NOT in effect. The batter is out regardless of whether the catcher catches the ball.

NOTES:

- The withdrawal of an ineligible pitcher after that pitcher is announced, or after a warmup pitch is delivered, but before that player has pitched a ball to a batter, shall not be considered a violation. Little League officials are urged to take precautions to prevent protests. When a protest situation is imminent, the potential offender should be notified immediately.

- Pitches delivered in games declared “Regulation Tie Games” or “Suspended Games” shall be charged against pitcher’s eligibility.
- In suspended games resumed on another day, the pitchers of record at the time the game was halted may continue to pitch to the extent of their eligibility for that day, provided said pitcher has observed the required days of rest.

SAFETY:

- Only players, managers, and approved coaches are permitted on the playing field during game play and practice sessions.
- Batters and base runners are required to wear a helmet at all times.
- Catchers must wear a catcher’s helmet (with face mask and throat guard), chest protector, shin guards.
- A coach or bench player wearing a catcher’s mask may warm up their pitcher between innings on the playing field.
- Regulations prohibit on-deck batters. No player should handle a bat until it is his/her time to bat with the exception of an on-deck batter on the field during the opposing team’s warmup pitches.
- All bats should be kept on the outside of the dugout area during game play.
- Players may not wear watches, rings, pins, jewelry or other metallic items.
- A player is not allowed to wear metal spikes.
- If a player is injured, no matter how minor, an incident report must be completed and turned in by the manager (forms will be located at the concession stand and can be turned in there).

All other rules are by the Little League Rulebook.