

EASTERN LITTLE LEAGUE
Rookie Division Rules

Updated January 2026

1. The Rookie Division is a training league for boys and girls, ages 7 and 8 years old.
2. Participating boys and girls playing age will be determined by how old they are on August 31st of the year in question.
3. All players, coaches and parents are to conduct themselves in an orderly manner. Disorderly or unsportsmanlike conduct of the aforementioned people could result in removal from park and possible suspension from the league. NO parents are allowed on the playing field at any time. Coaches and/or assistant coaches are prohibited from any and all FOUL LANGUAGE. Failure to do so will result in the umpire evicting you from the playing field. NOTE: One warning will be issued.
4. Managers and/or assistant coaches are prohibited from drinking ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, or being under the influence of ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUGS before and/or during any activity affiliated with Eastern Little League (games, practices, etc.). This will also apply to ANY TOBACCO products. Upon written complaint of such offenses, the board will investigate the incident; and if found guilty, the penalty is immediate suspension.
5. Rookie games will consist of 5 innings. However, a game is considered final after a complete inning and 1 hour and 5 minutes have elapsed regardless of the innings completed.
 - a. The slaughter rule is in effect and the game is final if the home team is 13 runs ahead after the top of the 4th inning, or the visiting team is 7 runs ahead after the bottom of the 4th inning. There is a 6-run limit per inning at bat.
 - b. If 4 innings have been completed and a game is called due to darkness or a weather-related event, the game will be considered complete regardless of the time remaining.
 - c. If a game is called due to darkness or a weather-related event with 11 minutes or more remaining of the allotted 1 hour and 15 minutes and less than 4 innings played, said game will be scheduled to be completed on the next available date.
 - d. NOTE: The Umpire will decide if a game is called due to darkness or a weather-related event.
 - e. All teams will be allowed 7-1/2 minutes OR an equal amount; time permitting, for infield practice. There will be a 1 hour and 15-minute time limit set for league

games. NOTE: Important that first game starts on time. Delaying tactics will not be tolerated. Timeouts should not be used to question a judgment call. Time may be called to get a rule interpretation during a dead ball. The Umpire, at times of their discretion, may explain a call between innings.

- f. A game will be considered forfeited to the opposing team if a team is unable to field (8) players at the scheduled starting time. There will be no grace period. If neither team is able to field (8) players at the scheduled time, there will be a forfeit charged to each team.
- g. A team can compete with 8 players, but will be assessed an automatic out when the 9th batter is due up in the lineup, regardless of the game situation
- h. Each Head Coach will turn in a line up prior to the beginning of the game with the names of all players present with jersey numbers. In the event a player arrives late, that player will be added to the end of the lineup.
- i. Only bats that bear the USA Baseball logo signifying the bat meets the USA baseball bat standard will be permitted. The bat must be 30 inches and under with no more than a 2-5/8-inch diameter. Following Little League rules, only bats officially approved by little league will be used. The Head Coach will be responsible for ensuring players do not use bats not approved by Little League. For the first violation during the season, the hitter will be called out and a warning will be given to the Head Coach. For the second violation, the hitter will be called out and the Head Coach will be removed from the game. For the third violation, the hitter will be called out and the Head Coach will be suspended for the remainder of the season.
- j. Each team will have approximately 11-13 players on its rosters.
- k. RIF 10' baseballs or similar as provided by the league will be used.
- l. While it is not mandatory, it is strongly recommended, that all players wear an athletic cup and a Heart Guard during the games.

PLAYING RULES

1. Defensive Team:

- a) Regular infield positions (first, second, third, shortstop, pitcher, catcher) will maintain a position inside the marked infield-outfield line. There will not be more or less than 6 infielders. All other fielders must remain in the grass as all times.

- b) The player pitcher will be beside left or right of the designated coach pitcher. The player pitcher must be within approximately five feet from the rubber slab.
- c) Catchers will wear a full catcher's mask with throat guard, chest protector and shin guards and will take regular catching position behind the batter.
- d) Defensive coaches must remain in foul territory at all times. Teams may place one coach in the grass in foul territory on both sides of the outfield.
- e) Defensive players will not block the path of runners unless making a tag or going for the ball. (This will be a judgment call on the umpires' discretion). PENALTY: If any of the above infractions by the defense occurs, resulting in an out, the runner will get the next base.
- f) Each team while playing defense shall have the option of placing two (2) coaches in foul territory in the outfield to help instruct the players. The team playing defense shall also provide a coach behind the catcher to retrieve balls and keep the game moving. All other coaches must remain off the field of play.
- g) Intentional isolation – All Rookie Division players must have active participation on defense. Coaches may move players to different positions, however, when a player is moved they must remain playing that particular position for the remainder of that inning. In short, a player can only be moved to a different position (1) time during an inning, unless an injury occurs. IMPORTANT: If a player is not paying attention that could lead to harm or safety of that player or others, the coach has a responsibility to place that child into another position, preferably the outfield, where that player and others would be more comfortable and safe.

2. Offensive Team:

- a) The ball shall be pitched by a pitcher/coach from or just in front of the pitcher's mound. The pitcher should stand a minimum distance of 35' from the batter, which is approximately 10" in from the rubber on the pitcher's mound. If the pitcher/coach intentionally touches a batted ball, the runner going to first will be called out and the play shall be called dead. If the pitcher/coach intentionally fails to remove himself from a play being made to any base – the runner advancing to that base shall be called out as a result of coach's intentional obstruction.
- b) The coach or manager must wait for the umpire to call "play ball" before a ball is pitched.

- c) The batter will be given 6 pitches to place the ball into fair play. No player will strike out on a foul ball.
- d) Should the ball in play hit the coach/pitcher the ball will be a fair ball.
- e) Batters must attempt to lay the bat down. If a bat is thrown, the batter will receive a warning, upon the second violation the batter will be called out. A team will receive two warnings. After the third warning, the batter will be called out. For safety issues, this will be a point of emphasis for umpires.
- f) Should any player become injured by a batted or thrown ball, the ball is dead and the base runners advance to the base they are going to.
- g) A base runner who intentionally throws off their helmet while running bases will be warned and called out upon a 2nd incident.
- h) If a base runner runs out of the baseline to avoid being tagged (umpire judgment), the base runner will be called out.
- i) If a base runner leads off the base before the batter hits the ball, the base runner will be called out.
- j) Runners missing the base will be called out by the umpire. A runner missing home plate will be called out if he/she goes into the dugout. The runner must return in a reasonable amount of time. A runner must be tagged if not a force play. Coaches cannot touch or assist a runner to return and touch home plate. (NO APPEALS).
- k) If two runners are on base at the same time, the lead runner is safe, the second runner will be called out if tagged if he/she doesn't return to their base safely.
- l) No stealing/No infield fly rule.
- m) Batting out of order. Coaches are responsible for ensuring their players bat in the proper order. The scorekeeper, as well as coaches from both teams, will notify the umpire as soon as they become aware of a player batting out of order. The action taken is as follows:
 - (I) When the umpire is notified of a player batting out of order BEFORE HE/SHE actually puts the ball in play, the order will be corrected, with no penalty/out assessed.
 - (II) When the umpire is notified of a player batting out of order AFTER HE/SHE puts the ball in play but BEFORE ANOTHER PLAYER puts the ball in play, the order will be corrected, with

ALL BASE RUNNERS RETURNING TO THE PROPER BASE, with no penalty/out assessed.

(III) When the umpire is notified of a player batting out of order AFTER BOTH HE/SHE AND THE NEXT BATTER HAVE PUT THE BALL IN PLAY, all plays will be considered to stand as are, the order is considered correct, with no penalty/out assessed.

(IV) Once batting orders have been exchanged prior to start of game, any player arriving late will be added to the bottom of the batting order.

- n) It is the responsibility of the defense to stop runners from advancing from base to base. The umpire will call the play dead at first sight of advancement being stopped. Upon an overthrow to first base and if the ball remains in play, all runners may advance one additional base at their own discretion (i.e. batter may advance to second, baserunner on first may advance to third, baserunner on second may advance home). If the first baseman or another infield player retrieves the ball and no throw is made to attempt an out on an advancing runner, the play is dead. Upon an overthrow to any other base, runners may advance until stopped by the defense or the umpire calls time.
- o) Base coaches (one and only one at first and third) MUST remain in the coach's box while the ball is in play, and MAY NOT TOUCH THE BASE RUNNER. PENALTY: the baserunner is out.
- p) If there is a play at home plate, the baserunner must slide or they will be called out.

3. Ground Rules

- a) Any fair ball that bounces over or under the fence is a double. Players should raise their hands and let the umpire retrieve the ball.
- b) Any overthrow or pitch that goes over, under or through a fence, gate and/or into the dugout, or into a stack of equipment is a dead ball and allows runners to advance one base.
- c) Coaches and the team players will be the only people allowed in dugout.
- d) All coaches and assistant coaches are encouraged to wear a shirt and hat bearing the team name or letter.

- e) Scorekeeper, umpires and board members will be the only people allowed in the scorekeeper booth. League supervisors may umpire or appoint someone if regular umpires are unable to attend a game.
- f) Coaches may talk to his/her players on the field during a dead ball; coaches will not be allowed to slow down the game. Each coach is allowed one trip to the field during a dead ball in an inning.
- g) There will be a no protest rule. Any and all questions/concerns will be decided at the time in question. This decision will be made by umpire or any board member present.
- h) The visiting team of the first game of the day shall remove the tarp. The home team of the last game shall add the tarp if rain is in the forecast. Contact the Fields Representative for Rookie Ball if there is a question as to whether the tarp needs to be placed on the field.
- i) NO parents allowed on the field during a game. Parents using foul language or of unsportsmanlike condition will be warned once then asked to leave the park. Appropriate action will be taken by the umpire or any board member present.
- j) Coaches acting in an unsportsmanlike manner will be warned once. Upon a second time they will be ejected and must leave the park. Second ejection will result in dismissal. Refusal to leave will result in a forfeited game. Players are expected to also act in a sportsman like manner.
- k) There will be NO appeals. Umpires may appeal another umpire if he is out of position to make a call. NO protests on judgment calls.
- l) The coaches whose teams are first on a particular day will be responsible for:
 - 1. Getting out all the equipment.
 - 2. Stripe the field if need be.
 - 3. Get the field in condition to play.
 - 4. Inspect the field for holes, rocks, glass and unsafe conditions.
- m) No game will be started until the aforementioned items are completed. The coaches whose teams are last to play on any particular day will be responsible for:
 - 1. Putting away and locking up all the equipment.
 - 2. Police the entire area and pick up all trash in the dugout, playing field, concession stand area and bleachers area.

- n) These rules were developed to ensure fair play and some general fundamentals of baseball.

DRAFT RULES

The intent of the draft is to create teams that are equal in ability and age.

1. Team Make-up

- a) The number of players per team will be no less than 11 and no more than 13.
- b) Teams with six players of the same age must draft a different age if available.
- c) There may be circumstances in which a team will have more than 6 players of the same age due to the number of 7 or 8 year-olds available. However, this will be monitored closely and prevented from happening if possible.

2. Draft Order

- a) The draft will be a straight draft format.
- b) The draft will start in reverse order of the standings at the end of the prior season.
- c) The team that finished last will have the first pick in the draft, etc.
- d) Teams needing 8 or more players will draft every round.
- e) Teams needing 7 players will draft every round but the 4th
- f) Teams needing 6 players will draft every round but the 4th and 5th
- g) Teams needing 5 players will draft every round but the 3rd, 4th, and 5th
- h) Teams needing 4 players will draft every round but the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th
- i) If any new players sign up for the Rookie League prior to games starting, the player will be first added to any 10-player team that has lost a player for the season due to injury, quitting, etc. If no team has lost a player, the next team in draft order will receive the new player. No team shall have more than 13 players.

3. Expansion Teams

- a) If the creation of an expansion team(s) is necessary, that team(s) will choose the unallocated 8 year-olds before the draft begins. The expansion team(s) will also have the first picks in the draft.
- b) In the creation of more than one expansion team is necessary, a hat draw will determine who gets the number one pick. The other expansion team will have the number two pick in the draft.

4. Coach Picks and Sibling/Family Picks

- a) A head coach's child or children are protected through the 4th round. Therefore, a head coach must select his child prior to the 5th round with the picks he has available.
- b) If the head coach has more than 1 child in the draft they must be taken in subsequent rounds.
- c) Sibling/family picks are protected through the 3rd round.
- d) Sibling/family picks are defined as: brothers and sisters only.

5. Player Status

- a) Any player 7 years of age that played in the spring will be considered a returning player and will remain with their spring team.
- b) Any player that played in the fall season but not the spring season is considered a new player, must attend tryout, and will be placed in the draft.
- c) Any player who does not attend tryouts will be placed into a hat pick pool.
- d) Hat Pick Pool players will be assigned to teams by blind draw after all evaluation attendees have been drafted and placed on a team.
- e) **Updated - Hat Pick Pool players will be assigned to teams by blind draw as part of the 7th round. Rule is subject to change based on number of Hat Pick Pool players and/or last-minute registrants.**