

## 2021 FCKLL A Level Special Playing Rules

-Rules amended for 2021: Clarification of called strikes 2.3, removal of Infield Fly Rule 2.6, amendment of Catcher Role 3.9, addition of Catching Coach 5.5 -

### 1.1 Games

1.2 A game is complete at the end of five innings or according to the time limit noted in rules 1.2 and 1.3.

1.3 Games shall begin at the scheduled time. No new inning may begin if one hour and thirty minutes has elapsed from the scheduled start time of the game.

1.4 All games will be played with a “drop dead” time limit of one hour and 45 minutes from the scheduled start time. If the game reaches the time limit in the middle of an inning, the score will revert back to the previous completed inning.

**Note:** “Stalling” tactics (attempts to slow the game in an effort to reach the “drop dead” time) are unsportsmanlike and will not be tolerated. If you suspect a manager is employing stalling tactics, alert the level coordinator. Managers who use such tactics are subject to discipline by the league.

**Note:** Time limits are measured from the scheduled start time. Managers should impress upon their parents the need to be on time or early for games. With the time limits in place and measuring from the scheduled start time, there should be no instances of delays at the start of games. A-Ball parents are often sensitive to the length of games. Starting on time and following the time limits should help address their concerns. In the case of field maintenance due to inclement weather causing a delay in the start time, the V.P. Operations or his representative will determine a new official start time.

1.5 An inning consists of three outs or five runs whichever comes first. An inning begins immediately at the conclusion of the previous inning.

1.6 If a game is ended at the completion of five innings or according to a deadline and is tied, the tie game will count as 1/2 win and 1/2 loss in season standings.

### 2.0 The Batter

2.1 A continuous batting order will be employed. The offensive team must bat all of their available players. It is strongly recommended the batting order be changed from game to game to allow all players an opportunity to bat at different positions in the batting order.

2.2 Five strikes is an out.

2.3 Only swinging strikes will be called on batters. Offensive coaches/pitching coach will encourage batters to swing at “hittable” pitches, signifying a liberal strike zone.

2.4 There are no walks.

2.5 A batter hit by a pitch will not be awarded first base.

### 3.1 The Fielder

- 3.2 Teams may field 10 players on defense. Only six players, including the pitcher and catcher, may play the infield. Outfielders must be positioned in the outfield.
- 3.3 The fielder at the pitcher position will be positioned approximately six feet to either side of the coach or pitching machine depending on which one is applicable. The “pitcher” should take all throws from the catcher or any fielders at the end of a play.
- 3.4 Each team should have a minimum of eight players to play a game. If a team has only seven players, the offensive team will provide a player in the field. This “loaner” player will be the player having batted last for the offensive team in the previous inning, excluding the player who will be catching in the next inning. At the start of the game, the “loaner” will be the player batting last in the line up.
- 3.5 No player should sit out a second defensive inning until every player has sat out at least one defensive inning. The only exceptions are cases involving player discipline or injury. The level coordinator should be notified of any cases of players losing playing time due to discipline issues or injury.
- 3.6 Each player must start a minimum of every other game.
- 3.7 Each player must play a minimum of 1 inning in the infield per game.
- 3.8 In any one game, no player may play the same position twice. This rule includes the positions of pitcher and first base. An exception may be made for the catcher position.
- 3.9 The catcher shall be positioned behind the Catching Coach (see Sec. 5.5). The catcher shall not receive pitches. The catcher **must** wear a batting helmet while fielding this position. The catcher should play the position once the ball is in play. <sup>1</sup>

### 4.1 Runner

- 4.2 With two outs, the offensive team may employ a “courtesy runner”, for the player who will be catching the next inning. The runner who is removed must catch the next inning. The “courtesy runner” must be the player that recorded the last out in the batting order.
- 4.3 There will be no “courtesy runner” for the home team in the fifth inning.
- 4.4 A batter/baserunner is entitled to no more than one base on a ball fielded in the infield. Baserunners may not advance on overthrows.

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<sup>1</sup> This rule has been modified from the original to accommodate COVID-19 protocols in place during the 2021 Season. The original rule is as follows: “The catcher shall be positioned directly behind home plate at a safe distance from the batter. The catcher shall wear complete catcher’s gear including mask and helmet, chest protector, shin guards and catcher’s mitt. Boys must wear an athletic supporter with a protective cup. The catcher should be in a proper catching position and should not move before the pitch has reached the batter.”

4.5 A batter/baserunner may advance more than one base on batted balls hit to the outfield. Baserunners must stop when a fielder executes an overhand throw toward the infield. Baserunners may reach the bases they were advancing to when the throw was made.

4.6 No stealing is allowed. Runners may not advance on wild pitches or passed balls.

## **5.1 Coaches**

5.2 Pitching Coach: The coach representing the team on offense shall pitch on one knee from between 36' - 40' from home plate.

5.3 Base Coaches: The offensive team will position a base coach in each of the first and third base coach's boxes. Base coaches are subject to all standard Little League regulations including not being able to make contact with the baserunners.

5.4 Field Coaches: The defensive team may position up to two coaches in the field to instruct players on defense. The coaches must be positioned in the outfield, and they cannot interfere with any play.

5.5 Catching Coach: One coach from either the defensive or offensive team should be positioned behind home plate to instruct the catcher and ensure safe positioning of the catcher relative to the batter. The catching coach should have a spare game ball to give the catcher on passed balls to speed returning the ball to play. The offensive team may provide the catching coach if they have enough coaches. If the offensive team doesn't wish to provide a coach, the defensive team will. If the catching coach is from the offensive team, the coach may offer instruction to the batter.

5.6 Dugout Coach: A coach must be positioned in the dugout anytime there is a player on the bench. The dugout coach is responsible for maintaining order in the dugout and preparing players for their turn at bat or defensively in the field.

## **6.1 Regular Season & Post-Season Structure**

6.2 The regular season will consist of 10 – 14 games as determined by the V.P. of Operations and league scheduler.

6.3 The regular season will be split in to a first half and second half.

6.4 A champion will be determined for both the first and second halves based on overall record for teams during the respective half of the season. In the case of two or more teams being tied with the best overall record for a half, the tie will be broken as described below in rule 6.7.

6.5 The Regular Season Champion will be determined in a one game playoff between the first and second half champions. In the case of the same team winning both the first and second halves, that team will be the Regular Season champion.

6.6 The regular season will be followed by single elimination post-season play.

6.7 Post-season seeding will be determined as follows:

- 6.7.a The regular season champion will be the number one seed.
- 6.7.b The runner-up team from the regular season championship game will be the number two seed.
- 6.7.c If there was no regular season championship game because the same team won both the first and second halves, the number two seed will be determined by overall combined regular season record in the same manner as the remaining seeds.
- 6.7.d The remaining seeds will be determined by overall combined regular season records. In the case of ties, seeding will be determined by the tie breaking procedures described below.

#### 6.8 Tie breaking procedures:

- 6.8.a In the case of ties with two or more teams having the same record, the following criteria will be used to determine standings.
  - Two team ties:
    - Head-to-head competition
    - If the two teams split their head-to-head competition, compare each team's record against the team occupying the highest position in the standings and continue down through the standings until one team gains the advantage and breaks the tie.
    - If a tie still exists, the tie will be broken with a coin toss.
  - Three or more team ties:
    - Compare the records of each of the tied teams against the other teams involved in the tie. If one team has an advantage in record against the tied teams, that team earns the highest position.
    - If the multiple team tie still exists, compare each of the tied teams' records against the team occupying the highest position in the standings and continue down through the standings until the tie is reduced to a two-team tie (at which time, revert to the two-team process) or until the tie is broken.
    - If a tie still exists, the tie will be broken with a coin toss.

#### 6.9 End-of-Season Games

- 6.9.a No new inning will begin after one hour and thirty minutes from the start time, but any inning that has begun will be played to completion.
- 6.9.b Innings will have a five-run limit with the exception of an unlimited inning which will be declared by the umpire when an inning begins after one hour and 15 minutes from the scheduled start time.
- 6.9.c If at the completion of five innings or the completion of an inning following the time limit a game is tied, an additional "unlimited" run inning will be played.

Eight teams



Seven teams



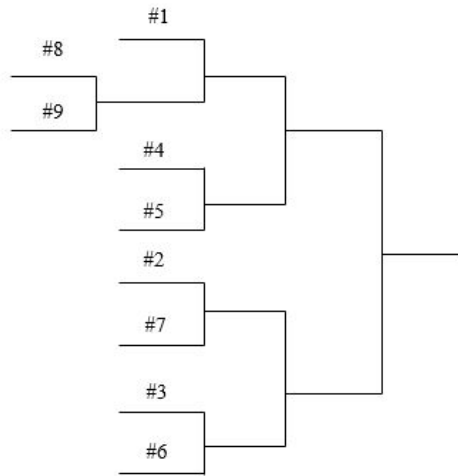
Six teams



Five teams



Nine Teams



Ten Teams

