

MDLL Standards for Player Development

In general, a player's skills are deemed ready for them move up into the next division if at the end of the season they have mastered the following Standards applicable to the Division in which they just played:

Tee Ball

Objective: All players should develop an understanding of the basics of baseball and have as much fun as possible. The rules can be loose at this level as long as the kids have fun. Success is measured by (1) safety, and (2) the number of kids returning next season.

Structure: Each player gets to bat in each inning, and the last player runs all the way home. We will not keep track of outs.

Standards

Batting:

- Each player will understand that they are only to handle the bat when it is their turn to hit and only swing when they are at the plate and the coach tells them to swing.
- Each player shall learn and become comfortable with the correct batting stance and grip on the bat.
- Each player shall learn to run the bases in the proper order.
- Each player shall learn to take baserunning instructions from a coach on the field.

Base-Running:

- Each player will be able to name each base, as well as home plate.
- Each player will be able to demonstrate the proper order in which to run the bases.
- Each player will run until the coaches say to stop.

Throwing:

- Each player will be able to demonstrate the proper stride foot when making a throw.

Defense:

- Each player shall learn the proper position for fielding a ball rolled toward them.
- Each player shall learn to pick the ball up and throw toward the base as directed by a coach.

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Single A

Objective: All players will learn basic baseball rules, experience increased skills and confidence, and have fun as shown by their choice to return next season.

Structure: Coach Pitch. Each inning will end when there are 3 outs or 5 runs scored. Each batter will get up to 7 pitches, be they balls or strikes, to put a ball in play.

Standards

Batting:

- Each player will be able to demonstrate a proper stance, a proper grip and the 3 steps to a proper rotational swing.

Base-Running:

- Each player will run to first on a hit ball focusing on the base and not on tracking their hit.

Throwing and Catching:

- Each player will be able to demonstrate proper technique to throw a baseball.
- Each player will be able to demonstrate proper technique to safely catch a ball thrown gently to them.

Defense:

- Each player will demonstrate proper technique to field a ground ball.
- Each player will demonstrate the proper way to track and catch a short pop up.

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Double A

Objective: All players should understand most normal baseball play at this level. The pitching and catching skills of all players will start developing at this level.

Structure: Players will pitch, but no one will pitch more than two innings. Catchers will catch no more than two innings also to encourage more players to try the position. Coaches will be encouraged to try everyone at pitcher and/or catcher during the season if the kids are willing. Everyone will play at least one inning in the infield each game unless there is a safety issue or if the player is too afraid, even after great encouragement.

Standards

Batting:

- Batters will get normal pitch counts.
- Batters will demonstrate consistent knowledge of the strike zone, and the willingness to defend it aggressively when batting with 2 strikes.
- Each player will be able to demonstrate proper bunting technique.
- Each player will be able to demonstrate proper technique to get out of the way of a wild pitch while batting.
- Each player shall overcome their fear of the ball while batting sufficient to maintain proper technique throughout their swing.
- Batters will demonstrate respect to the umpires at all times, regardless of their opinion of any given call.

Base-Running:

- Each player will demonstrate safe sliding technique and will know to always slide into home base.
- Each player will understand when they must run (force play) and when they have the option to stay put.

Throwing and Catching:

- Each player will be able to accurately throw and catch from second base to first base.
- Each player will be able to safely and consistently field a ground ball and a pop up.

Defense:

- Each player will be able to routinely field a ground ball hit to them by a coach and make an accurate throw to 1st base from 2nd base demonstrating proper technique.
- Each player will demonstrate an understanding that every defender has a responsibility on virtually every ball hit into play.
- Each player will learn the difference between a force play and a tag play.

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Triple A

Objective: All players will understand all fundamental rules of Little League baseball.

Structure: Normal batting rules are in play. Bunting is permitted, but a batter is called out and no runner advances if they pretend to bunt and then swing. Lead-offs are not permitted. Stealing is permitted once the ball passes the plate. Players may attempt to take an extra base on a walk.

Standards

Batting:

- Each player will be able to consistently bunt pitched balls onto the ground into the field of play.
- Each player will demonstrate knowledge of the strike zone and consistently make sound swing decisions at the plate in games and practice situations.

Base-Running:

- Each player will demonstrate safe and proper sliding technique and their willingness to use it appropriately in game and practice situations.
- Each player will be able to remember and be able to follow at least two separate signs on the basepaths transmitted by a coach.

Throwing and Catching:

- Each player will be able to accurately throw and catch a baseball from shortstop to first base.

Defense:

- Everyone will play at least one inning in the infield per game.
- Each player will be able to routinely field a ground ball hit to them by a coach and make an accurate throw to 1st base from shortstop demonstrating proper technique.
- Each player will be able to safely and routinely catch a pop up in the shallow outfield using proper technique and throw the ball accurately to home plate with no more than one bounce.
- Each player will be able to demonstrate proper placement and technique for situations involving cutoff throws from the outfield.
- Each player will consistently execute defensive back up responsibilities in practice and game situations.
- Each player will demonstrate proper technique for playing defense in a run down situation.
- Each player will have their equipment nearby and ready to take the field when an offensive inning concludes.

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Majors

Objective: All players will understand all baseball rules.

Structure: Consistent with AAA. Normal batting rules are in play. Bunting is permitted, but a batter is called out and no runner advances if they pretend to bunt and then swing. Lead-offs are not permitted. Stealing is permitted. Players may attempt to take an extra base on a walk.

Standards

Batting:

- Players will anticipate their upcoming at-bat and be equipped and ready when it is their time to be on-deck.
- Batters will routinely look to the 3rd base coach for signs without prompting, and consistently obey those signs at the plate.

Base-Running:

- Lead-offs are not permitted.
- Stealing is permitted.
- Runners will routinely look to the 3rd base coach for signs without prompting and will follow those signs on the basepaths.

Throwing and Catching:

- Each player will be able to accurately throw and catch a baseball from 3rd base to 1st base.

Defense:

- Everyone will play at least one inning in the infield.
- Each player will be able to execute, in both game and practice situations, proper placement and technique for plays involving cutoff throws from the outfield.
- Each player will understand signs calling for, and be able to successfully execute in both game and practice situations, defensive play designs when opposing runners are on 1st and 3rd.
- Each player will understand and consistently execute the backup responsibilities associated with each position they play.
- Each player, with the exception of pitchers and catchers, will routinely jog to their defensive positions upon leaving the dugout, with 1st basemen and center fielders taking practice balls with them for warmups.