

FALL 2025
Minors
Tempe South Little League
Local Rules

Managers are responsible for the behavior of their coaches, players, and parents. Managers need to educate these individuals about the rules so there is no confusion or misunderstanding regarding what occurs on the field. The following is a list of key topics and rules that always seem to bring questions and misunderstandings during the season. Please keep these in mind, and everyone will have a fun season.

1. Game Behavior

- a. All managers, coaches, players, and parents must exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. Do not argue on judgment calls. If you believe a rule has been improperly applied, request a time out and come out to discuss the ruling.
- b. The volume and tone of the discussion should be such that parents, fans, other coaches, and players do not hear or participate in the conversation. The discussion is between the manager and the umpire.
- c. Between innings is a great time to discuss any questions you may have had about a judgment call or any other aspect of the inning.
- d. Only the manager should be involved in any discussions with umpires regarding calls. It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that coaches do not come on to the field during such discussions and to ensure that players and coaches are not involved.
- e. The penalty for violation of any of the rules or exhibition of poor sportsmanship will be at the discretion of the League President and the Minors Director and could include a warning, game forfeit, manager probation, or manager suspension. **If a manager or coach is ejected from the game by an umpire, he will automatically be suspended for his next game.**
- f. Bear in mind that our dugout fences are chain-link. You should assume that the umpire can hear every word you say in the dugout, especially those comments that are derogatory about him or the way he is calling the game.
- g. All games and practices are alcohol and tobacco-free. This includes the hours before the game. Do not allow your Coaches on the field of play or into the dugout with any aroma of alcohol. This reflects badly on our League and is not the behavior our Parents expect the coaches to model.

2. General Rules

- a. Home team uses the third-base dugout. Visiting team will use the first-base dugout.
- b. The home team is responsible for providing the game balls as well as **setting up/tearing down** the field. The game balls are distributed before the season starts, so save the appropriate number: three per game. The POD will no longer be stocked with game balls. Please make sure the cages and the shed are locked before you leave the field if you are the last game of the day or if there is an open period before the next game that day.
- c. Only uniformed players, managers and coaches are allowed in the dugout and as base coaches—no parents, brothers, sisters, or friends.

- d. No more than **one manager and two coaches** per team in the dugout and on the field. All must be in uniform. This rule will be strictly enforced.
- e. Any coach in the dugout or on the field must have submitted a TSSL volunteer application and had their background check approved by the league. No exceptions. Coaches screened during the Spring 2024 season do not require an additional screening for the Fall. A list of screened Coaches will be provided to all managers at least two weeks before opening day. If your preseason practice coaches are not on that list have them fill out the Volunteer Application immediately, provide a photocopy of their Drivers License and get the form to the Division Director for the second set of background checks. Please communicate to all of your parents that we do this as part of the national Little League policy, we take it seriously and by being consistent we are protecting our Children, not harassing Volunteers.
- f. No defensive coaches are allowed on the field.
- g. The official scorebook is kept by the home team. Pitch counts will be recorded by each team and by the official score keeper and certified in the scorebook at the end of the game. If there are any discrepancies, contact the League Director after the game. **A Manager risks suspension if he has not met the pitching and playing time rules.** It is strongly recommended that the pitch counters for the two teams confer each half-inning.
- h. BOTH TEAMS should e-mail the scores and pitch counts to Scores@Tempesouth.com on the same night so that the results can be posted on the league website. Please copy the visiting manager on that e-mail to help ensure accuracy. If GAMECHANGER is used to score the game, there is no need to forward the pitch counts.
- i. Teams are required to have at least 8 players to play an “official” game. If a team has 7 or less players, the teams should play a scrimmage. **NO GAMES WILL BE RESCHEDULED.**
- k. If a team is forced to field only eight players, it can borrow a player from the other team for defensive purposes only. The borrowed player shall be the last out of the previous inning. The opposing team must provide an extra fielder if the short team requests it, but the team that is short is not required to take the player. They can play with 8 fielders if they elect to do so.

3. Run Rule

- a. There is no “mercy rule” in the Minors at which time the game will be called.
- b. A team’s at-bat is over when it scores five runs or has three outs. A final play of the inning that results in more than five runs for that inning will be played to completion, but only the five runs will count for that inning.
- c. **If a team is trailing and it is their last at-bat, the five-run limit will not apply.**
 - **After one hour and 25 minutes of game time has elapsed, if the Visiting team is:**
 - 1) losing,
 - 2) batting, and
 - 3) the potential 5th run comes to the plate to bat,
 - **The plate umpire will notify both managers that the last inning rules have begun, based upon clock time. The umpire’s judgement is an estimate. If the inning is completed quickly and the one hour 40 minutes has not lapsed, another inning may start.**

- If the trailing team is the visiting team, that team can score as many runs as necessary to catch up and take the lead by five runs.
 - If the trailing team is the home team, that team can score as many runs as necessary to catch up and win the game.
- d. Regular-season games can end in a tie. There are no extra innings during the regular season in Minors, even if the time limit has not expired

4. Starting Times

- a. Weeknight games start at 5:30. No live batting practice can occur with both teams on the field. (Whiffles and Soft Toss are ok.) Please do not hit baseballs against the backstops or fences.
- b. If the first game runs long, have your kids warm and ready to go. We want to start right at 5:30 so we can get in as much baseball as possible, but also remembering that kids need to get home and in bed at a reasonable hour.
- c. Games are scheduled for 6 innings, but a time rule is in effect. **No inning can start after 1 hour and 40 minutes of play.** The next inning begins when the third out of the prior inning occurs. **There is a DROP DEAD time in Fall MINORS -- at 7:20pm the game is over.** If a game is called due to the DROP DEAD rule, the team leading at the end of the last completed inning will win the game.

5. Safety Issues

- a. No batting donuts, “brats bats,” or other similar heavy batting aids are allowed.
- b. Catchers must always have a helmet, throat guard, mask, shin guards, and a cup. During warm-ups anywhere on the field or in the bullpens, the helmet and mask are always required for catchers. All catchers must wear a catcher’s mitt behind the plate.
- c. Coaches are encouraged to warm up pitchers between innings, while the catcher is gearing up. This is not permitted in the District tournament, however.
- d. Jewelry is not allowed except for medical alert purposes.
- e. Pitchers may not wear any sort of sweatband on wrists. Batting gloves with white markings will also not be allowed. Pitchers’ gloves cannot have white anywhere on the outside. Undershirts with visible sleeves cannot be white or light colored. Some Umpires do not allow ANY long-sleeved undershirts.
- f. No on-deck batters are allowed. This includes in the dugout. Players are not permitted to have bats in their hands while in the dugout.

6. Pitching Rules

- a. **NO PITCHER MAY PITCH MORE THAN 25 PITCHES, not to exceed two innings (one pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched). After 25 pitches, the Coach will pitch to the balance of the team until there are three outs or the run rule is achieved. TWO players may not pitch in the same inning. If the player reaches the 25 maximum, the Offensive coach will pitch the batters for the balance of the inning.**

Exception: If a pitcher reaches the maximum daily pitch limit for his/her league age while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until that batter reaches base or is put out.

- b. A pitcher who first plays catcher can be inserted as a pitcher, unless that player has played the position of catcher for four or more innings in that game. A player who has played the position of catcher for four or more innings in a game is not eligible to pitch on that calendar day.
- c. **There are no intentional walks in Fall Ball.**
- d. A pitcher that has been removed from the mound cannot re-enter the game as a pitcher.
- e. A pitcher may be removed, without penalty, after he has thrown warm-up pitches but before he has thrown a pitch to a batter. If an ineligible pitcher is announced or throws warm-up pitches but does not pitch to a batter, there is no violation. No violation of the pitching rules occurs until that pitcher throws a pitch to a batter. Opposing managers who are aware that a pitcher is ineligible are strongly encouraged, but not required, to raise the issue before the pitcher throws his first official pitch.
- f. A manager or coach may visit the mound **TWICE IN A GAME** without removing that pitcher. On the third visit, a new pitcher must be brought in. An injury does not count as a mound visit, but the manager must first consult with the home plate umpire and ask permission to check on the injury.

7. Substitution Rules

- a. Players are encouraged to play all positions deemed safe by their coach.
- b. **No player may be out of a game defensively for TWO CONSECUTIVE INNINGS IN ANY GAME.**
- **All players must play in the field defensively for a minimum of 4 innings in a 6 inning game**
- Exception: If a player is ill, injured or being disciplined, the team's manager needs to notify the umpire and opposing manager to make them aware of the exception.
- c. Every player on your team who is present and available to play (i.e., not injured) for a given game must be in the batting order. There is no option to bat fewer than all of your players.
- e. If a player shows up after the batting orders are exchanged between the teams, he will be added to the bottom of the batting order.

- f. If the player is injured or leaves the game for any reason, the team takes an out the first time his spot in the batting order comes up. No out is taken in subsequent innings.
- g. If a manager makes the umpire and the other manager aware that a player will need to leave a game after it starts, there will be NO OUT for his/her subsequent at bats after leaving the game. However, the manager must give a specific time and the player will not be able to bat after that time for this rule to be in place.
- h. A team may use a courtesy runner only for an injured player. The courtesy runner must be the last batted out or, if the team has not batted yet, the last batter in the order. Use of “special pinch runners” or runners for the pitcher or catcher is not allowed. ***TSLL has not adopted the NATIONAL LL rule regarding special runners.***

8. Base Running Rules

- a. Batters cannot advance to first on a dropped third strike. The batter is out on third strike, whether it is caught by the catcher or not. ***The dropped-third strike rule was specifically reviewed by TSLL and NOT adopted for 2024, (disregard the National LL rule).***
- b. The ball is “Live” at all times except:
 - The time between when:
 - (1) the pitcher’s foot is in contact with the rubber and the catcher is in position to receive the ball, and
 - (2) the pitched ball crosses the plate.
 - The umpire calls time out
- c. Runners can advance at all times when the ball is in play. A pitcher holding the ball on the mound is not a reason for runners to stop advancing bases.
- d. Players can steal second or third, ***BUT NOT HOME***. There are no lead-offs.
- e. The ball is live on all walks. A batter who is issued a walk may advance beyond first base at his own risk. Other runners also can advance beyond a forced base at their own risk.
- f. Runners on third base may not steal home unless a play is made on ANY runner. If a catcher’s throw to the pitcher goes beyond the pitcher and it wasn’t an attempt to make a play on the runner, the runner on third may not steal home. However, a runner on first base may advance to second at his own risk. If a play is attempted on that runner, the runner at third base may advance to home at his own risk. The umpire will determine if a throw to the pitcher by the catcher was intended to be a return to the pitcher or an attempted throw at a runner.
- h. There is ***no Infield Fly rule*** in Minors. The play is too difficult for the umpires, runners, fielders and coaches to determine at the Minor level.

9. Other Rules That Always Invoke Questions

- a. A “foul tip” is a batted ball that goes directly back to the catcher’s glove and is caught. The ball remains “live.” A ball not caught by the catcher is simply a foul ball.
- b. Anytime a ball hits a batter’s hands, the play is dead. The hands are not considered a part of the bat.

- 1) If the batter is not swinging the bat and the ball is out of the strike zone when the batter is struck, the batter is awarded first base.
 - 2) If the batter is not swinging the bat and the ball is in the strike zone when the batter is struck, it is a strike.
 - 3) If the batter is swinging the bat and the ball hits the batter's hands, or any part of his body, a strike is called. It is not a foul.
- c. The strike zone is from the knees to the armpits when the batter steps into the batter's box. Any part of the ball passing through this zone will be called a strike. The strike zone will be generous and will be called consistently for all pitchers regardless of their skill level.
 - d. Please keep coaching signs short and quick. Batters are required to keep one foot in the box while receiving signs.
 - e. There is no mandatory sliding rule except when there is a play at home plate and a slide is warranted for safety reasons in the opinion of the umpire. "A runner is out when the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag." If a fielder is blocking the baseline without the ball, he will be called for obstruction. Head-first slides are only allowed to return to a base. Remember the following:

Fielders have the right-of-way on a batted ball.
Runners have the right-of-way on a thrown ball.
 - f. A runner cannot be tagged out for over-running or over sliding first base if said runner returns immediately. Note: A runner may turn in any direction after reaching first base. The runner's intent shall be judged in determining whether to call him out.
 - g. Penalties for bat-throwing are at the discretion of the umpire. If the incident warrants it, a team warning will be given. If it occurs again on the same team, the batter will be called out.
 - h. There is no Little League rule that states that a pitcher must come out if he hits a certain number of batters. The only time a pitcher will be removed by an umpire is if he ascertains that hitting batters is deliberate.
 - i. A batted ball that gets tangled in an outfield fence, a sponsor's banner, or anyplace else, or goes under the fence in fair territory is a ground rule double. Runners on base advance two bases, so the runner on first does not come home. The ruling is two bases from the time of pitch.
 - j. "Slash bunting" is not allowed. If a player squares to bunt, he may attempt to bunt or pull back and take the pitch. Once he squares, a player may not pull back and attempt to make a full swing. A player who squares to bunt and then pulls back and swings will be called out. **Note: This is a local TSSL rule, not a NATIONAL LL rule.**

Important Techniques to Teach

1. Teach your players to tag low. At this age, many players attempt to tag at the level where they catch the ball, allowing the base runner to slide in under the tag.
2. Teach your catchers to stand immediately in front of the plate when a play is going on. When a catcher stands behind or on the plate waiting for a possible throw, bad things usually happen (collisions, obstruction, etc).

These rules are a supplemental to the National Little League rules. Please refer to the 2024 Little League Players Rules (green book) for the complete list of rules.

If you have issues with these guidelines please bring them to the Division Director, the League President or attend a Board Meeting to bring your input to everyone's attention. You, your assistants and your team Parents are the League. We serve the Youth of our Community.