

2025 ACORN 1 SUPPLEMENTAL RULES

Year 2026

Thousand Oaks Little League

Acorn 1 Division*

Key Contacts for Acorn 1 in 2026

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NOTE: These rules are subject to revision at any time by the Thousand Oaks Little Board of Directors. Any changes during the season will be appropriately communicated to all Acorn 1 Managers.

ACORN 1 RULES SYNOPSIS

1. Do not question umpires on judgment calls. Do not attempt to show umpires cell phone video. Live with the (potentially) bad call; win despite it.

2. PITCHING MACHINE SET UP - The pitching machine will be set to the following speeds: 3 (Feb 21-Mar 27), 4 (Mar 28-May 16), 5 (all-stars).

Coaches from BOTH teams are responsible for setting up the Blue Flame prior to the start of the game to ensure the speed and accuracy of the pitch is correct. No adjustments can be made to the machine in the middle of an inning, unless there is a safety issue, and ANY adjustments during or between innings must be agreed upon by both coaches. Adjusting the machine outside of this (i.e. for specific batters) will lead to a warning; then immediate ejection & possible suspension for a 2nd offense.

The foot pedal on the Blue Flame pitching machine must be pressed all the way down on every pitch. First offense is a warning. Second offense is an immediate ejection and suspension for the following game.

3. Teams play with 10 defenders, including 4 outfielders; all outfielders must play outfield positions and be at least 5 feet beyond the infield dirt.

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4. Games are 6 innings long, but no new inning will begin after 1:45 of game time. **EXCEPTION: 1:45 drop-dead time on Saturdays.** The horn from the Snack Shack indicates drop dead due to darkness. In the event of a drop-dead ending, the score reverts to the last complete inning.

5. In the first 4 innings teams may score a maximum of 3 runs per inning (including homeruns; if 2 runs have been scored in the inning, a 3-run homerun will count as 1 additional run in the scorebook, but the players may round the bases and celebrate. Scoring in the 5th and 6th innings is unlimited.

***2ND HALF OF SEASON (Mar 28-May 16) - VP of baseball & AC1 DD will review and assess gameplay and potential make additional adjustments to run limit rules**

6. The Little League 10-run mercy rule (ahead by 10+ after 4 innings) applies.

7. Final regular season standings determine playoff seeding. Throughout the playoffs the home team will be determined based on regular season standings, regardless of winners'/losers' bracket status. The team that finished higher in the regular season standings will be the home team in the playoffs. Tiebreakers: (a) head-to-head record; (b) runs allowed; (c) runs scored; (d) coin flip.

8. A total of 5 pitches will be pitched to each batter. Any pitch taken is a ball. Any pitch swung at is a strike. If the batter strikes out within the 5 pitches, the batter is out. If the batter does not swing at the 5th pitch, the batter is out. If the batter hits a foul ball on the 5th pitch, he will get another pitch. The batter can keep batting as long as he keeps fouling off pitches.

9. Over Throws

FIRST HALF OF THE SEASON (Feb 21-Mar 27) - Base runners MAY NOT advance an extra base on an overthrow. This teaches ALL fielders (and coaches) to try and get runners out at the bases vs "eating it"

SECOND HALF OF THE SEASON (Mar 28-May 16) - A player may advance one base on an overthrow PER BATTER - example: if there is an overthrow at 1B, the base runner can advance to 2B. Advancing to the next base is AT THE RUNNERS OWN RISK - it is not automatic and the runner can be thrown out going to 2B. If the fielder then overthrows 2B, the runner CANNOT go to 3B and MUST stay at 2B.

10. There is no scoring from third base on an overthrow.

11. **FIRST HALF OF THE SEASON (Feb 21-Mar 27):** Balls hit into the outfield are live, and runners can advance until the ball is returned to any part of the infield dirt. Once the ball enters the infield from the outfield, any base runners that are not halfway to the next base

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will be instructed to return to the previous base. Runners advancing to the next base IS AT THEIR OWN RISK - regardless if they are halfway or not, they can be thrown out - after the play is over, the runner will be sent back to the previous base if the umpire deems they were not halfway.

12. SECOND HALF OF THE SEASON (Mar 28-May 16): Balls hit into the outfield are live, and runners can advance until the ball is possessed by an infielder on any part of the infield dirt or grass, in fair or foul territory. Runners advancing to the next base IS AT THEIR OWN RISK - regardless if they are halfway or not, they can be thrown out - after the play is over, the runner will be sent back to the previous base if the umpire deems they were not halfway. An outfielder who fields a ball and runs into the infield will NOT stop the play until the ball is possessed by the infielder.

13. If a hit ball strikes the pitching machine it will be ruled a single. The batter will be awarded first base by the umpire and each base runner will move ahead one base if forced.

14. The pitcher (player) must keep one foot on the mound (dirt) during each pitch.

15. All players are REQUIRED to play at least one inning (3 consecutive outs) in the infield during every game, unless doing so would be a safety hazard (e.g., they can't protect themselves). Safety hazards must be approved by the Division Director and VP–Baseball. Catcher is NOT considered an infield position.

16. Acorn 1 teams play with 10 players (4 outfielders) and a minimum of 8 players. Any team with less than 8 will forfeit to the opposing team. Teams will have a 15-minute grace period to field 8 players before the game is called a forfeit by the umpire. **To obtain a pool player, contact Steve Colgate Registrar and Player Agent, via text message (916-532-9559) with as much warning as possible (at least 2 days before the game). Pool Players are not allowed to be used in the playoffs.**

17. USA bats required. No T-ball bats allowed (they will get destroyed). 26-inch USA bats (non-T-ball) are allowed.

18. The pitching machine will be set to the following speeds: 3 (Feb 22-March), 4 (March 25-May 17), 5 (all-stars).

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The Acorn Division has 2 levels; Acorn 1 for less experienced players ages 6-8 and Acorn 2 for more experienced players ages 7-9. Both levels are considered instructional and developmental divisions of Thousand Oaks Little League. The Acorn 1 level involves machine pitching with no walks. The Acorn 2 level introduces the players to kid pitching. While the players are introduced to competition at both levels, the main focus of the Acorn divisions is to prepare the players for the jump to the Minor and Major divisions. **We are here to teach, encourage and include all players.** The Managers and Coaches in the Acorn Divisions are not in competition with each other. While baseball is a game where the objective is winning, let the players provide their own pressure to win. At this level, we are to stress the importance of sportsmanship while also learning the fundamental baseball skills needed to achieve the goal of winning games as a TEAM.

The following rules will apply to the Acorn 1 level for the 2026 season

Conduct

It is essential that all managers, coaches, players' parents and spectators follow the rules of conduct for the league. This is a recreational league designed for the development of our young players. Please help in teaching appropriate ethical behavior and positive character traits, including respect for their parents, the coaches, other players and the umpires.

1. Managers are responsible for their conduct and the conduct of their coaches, players and associated fans. Please review the rules of conduct with your players and their families at the beginning of the season so there is no confusion. Misconduct will not be tolerated.
2. Managers and coaches of opposing teams will never debate umpire decisions.

WARNING: This is your only warning regarding conduct with umpires:

- A) **Only the team manager has the right to consult with the umpire.** All coaches must go through their team manager.
- B) To approach an umpire from the dugout or a coaching position, time out must be called after the play is over.
- C) Judgment calls by the umpire cannot be disputed. Misinterpretations of the rules may be questioned in a non-argumentative, non-threatening manner. If you do not agree with the umpire, immediately file a protest prior to play resuming. Make sure the scorekeeper documents the protest. In the event of a Protest situation, call the Division Director immediately after the game.

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D) Abusive conduct toward an umpire by a manager, coach or player is cause for immediate ejection from the game. If done by family or fans, that individual will be escorted from the fields.

E) Physical contact with the umpire is assault and cause for arrest.

F) All misconduct by managers and coaches will be brought before the board and have a long-lasting effect on future coaching positions.

3. If a manager, coach, or player is ejected from a game by an umpire or removed by a TOLL board member, that person must leave the Colina playfield immediately and have no further involvement with the game. Failure to do so will result in revocation of all playing or coaching privileges.

4. If a manager, coach, or player is ejected from the game, he or she is suspended for the rest of that game and at a min the next regularly scheduled game. At the discretion of the BOD, Longer suspension and/or disqualification for the entire season and future coaching may be issued pending the severity of the offense. The ejected manager, coach, or player must meet with the disciplinary committee before they may return to the field.

Practice

1. There are no more than three team assemblies per week regardless of location, no exceptions. This means that you may have three practices per week before games are played. After Opening Day, you can only get together with the team a total of three times. If you have two games a week, you may only practice once, whether at a field, park or batting cage. If you only have one game a week, then you may practice twice.

2. There may be conflicts regarding the right to practice fields. The manager holding the league issued assignment has rights to the field during the specified time periods. Yield to the scheduled team. If there has been a conflict of permits, call the Division Director ASAP or another TOLL Board Member. To prevent a problem, yield the field until the conflict can be resolved. There shall be no use of Colina fields for practice on Fridays.

3. You are responsible for the actions of your team at the practice fields. Please ensure that the fields are taken care of during your practice time.

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4. Medical releases (signed in blue ink) **MUST** be in possession of the manager or designated coach in the manager's absence for all games, practices and whenever the manager/coach is supervising the players. Make color copies for your coaches.

Game Times

1. All games must start on time according to the schedule. In order for all games to be completed on time, **NO NEW INNING can start after 1:45 (weekdays); 1:45 drop-dead time (Saturdays)**. The game scheduled start time IS when the game clock starts, unless unforeseen league operational circumstances cause a delay and a delayed start is approved by the Division Direction or VP of Baseball. It is the umpire's responsibility to determine when the time limit is reached, NOT the coach's - Coaches confirm time check with umpires between innings. Once the time limit is reached, the umpire will call the last batter and that batter will complete their at-bat. Coaches can check time with umpires between innings.

2. All games are six innings; no minimums. Games tied after six innings may continue within time parameters.

3. Prior to daylight savings time, games will end due to darkness or as signaled by a horn from the Snack Shack. The Snack Shack horn signals that all play is to stop immediately, no exceptions.

4. If a game is called for time, darkness, or weather, **the official score will be the score at the end of the last full inning.**

5. Ties count as ½ win, ½ loss for team standings.

Game Day

1. The visiting team is responsible for the following field prep before games:

- A) Provide one trash can for each side (home and visitor) of the field.
- B) Field Prep as outlined in the TOLL Field Prep guidelines

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2. During field prep, all unusual circumstances or safety issues found should be communicated to the other manager and the umpires prior to the start of the game. If the issue involves the safety of the players and cannot be resolved, contact a TOLL board member for assistance.

3. The home team is responsible for the following field duty after games:

A) Remove all trash from both sides of the field, dugout and stands, deposit in the dumpster and store the can.

B) See post-game field care in the TOLL Field Prep guidelines

C) Return bases and maintenance equipment to the shed, place all items in an orderly fashion and lock it.

D) Last games of the day: **The home team manager or coach must stay with the snack shack crew until they leave.** Please inform them, who you are, the Acorn team you are from and that you will be staying. If a board member is present, they may relieve you of your responsibility. Violations of this rule will result in sanctions of the manager.

4. Both teams are responsible for the cleanliness of the maintenance sheds under the score tower. Hoses must be coiled and hung. Tools must be neatly arranged. Clean up all chalk. Ensure that the pitching machine is put away correctly so that it will be in good working condition for the next game. We would like to maintain 2 pitching machines in good working order at all times. If there is an issue with one of the pitching machines, please let the Division Director know immediately so that repairs or replacement parts can be obtained.

5. Both teams must provide a scorekeeper for each game. The home team is responsible for the official league scorebook. If a team cannot provide an official TOLL certified scorekeeper then the team manager will be required to keep score instead of coaching. There will be no coaching or commentary of any kind allowed from the scorekeeper box.

6. Both teams are responsible for:

A) Rating the umpires via the Umpire Evaluation Form. The Umpire Evaluation Form is found on the website. It is very important that the umpire is given a rating after every game. This is used as a guide for improvements during the season.

B) Filing any protests.

C) Notifying the Acorn 1 Division Director of any problems immediately.

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7. Smoking (including vaping) and the consumption of alcohol are not permitted at any time. Please notify all players' parents.

8. **Food is NOT allowed in the dugouts.** Players must stay in the dugout when not in play. Exceptions are restroom trips only. **Parents are not permitted in the dugouts** (team parent OK).

9. Medical releases (signed in Blue Ink) must be present at each practice and game. Acorn 1 Division Director and the league Safety Officer must be contacted ASAP regarding all injuries that cause the player to seek medical attention.

10. Discipline problems and conflicts with parents are always a possibility. Please contact Acorn 1 Division Director for assistance. Please address potential problems early before they get bigger.

11. Kids and coaches must remain in the dugout during the game. An adult who has completed the volunteer Background Check needs to remain in the dugout at all times throughout the game. Therefore, teams on offense are allowed one coach in the dugout while having 3 coaches on the field. Teams are only allowed 3 coaches in the dugout while on defense. Therefore, if you have 4 coaches, one coach will be required to step off the field to maintain the 3-coach rule. Coaches must remain in the dugout on defense; no sitting or standing outside the dugouts.