



# MALL Softball Rules: AAA

effective 4/1/26

## 1. General

- The official Little League rulebook will be used except as noted in these rules.
- Fielder's masks are required and heart guards are strongly encouraged.
- Maximum 3 active coaches per team during a game.

## 2. Field & Equipment Set-Up

- **Bases** - Bases are set at **60 feet** for all levels.
- **Pitching Distance** - 35'
- **Balls** - 11"

## 3. Game Length

- 6 innings. No new inning begins after 1 hour 45 minutes
- If an inning cannot be completed because of darkness or weather, the score reverts back to the last full inning played.
- Games are official after 4 innings (or 3.5 if the home team is leading). If a game is suspended (due to weather or darkness), the game will resume after the last full inning played.
- A 10 run rule will be enforced after 4 innings (or 3.5 innings if the home team is ahead).

## 4. Rosters & Player Participation

- Defensive Variety: Other than pitcher, catcher and 1st base, no player is allowed to play the same position for more than 3 innings during a game (recommend 2 innings).
- No player can sit 2 defensive innings in a row.
- Every player must play a minimum of 3 full innings (9 defensive outs). At least 1 of those innings must be in the infield (unless there is a safety concern). (Pitcher and Catcher count as infield).

## 5. Defense

- **Standard Defense:** 10 players take the field, including 4 outfielders.
- **Minimum Players:** At least 8 players are required to start a game. 1 player can be borrowed from the opposing team to play RF/LF as needed. No penalty out is assessed for batting less than 9. If you know that you will have less than 9 prior to the game, contact the player agent to acquire pool player(s) so the game can be played.
  - If a team cannot field enough players and not enough advance notice is provided to reschedule, the game will be forfeited.
- Free Substitution: Players may be moved in and out of defensive positions freely; substitutions do not need to be announced.

- **Outfield Rules:** Outfielders must begin each pitch on the grass and cannot move into the infield dirt until the ball is in play.
- **Infield Fly & Dropped 3rd Strike:** Neither rule is in effect for AAA.

## 6. Pitching

- Players pitch every inning. If a pitcher throws 4 balls, a coach enters to finish the at-bat to eliminate walks.
- **Re-Entry:** A pitcher who is moved to a different defensive position (but stays in the game) may return to the mound anytime during the game.
- **Hitting the Batter:** A pitcher must be removed from the position for the remainder of the game if they hit 3 batters in one inning or 4 batters in total.
- **Windup:** Windmill or slingshot styles are permitted; pitchers may start with both feet on the rubber or one foot behind it.
- Intentional walks are not allowed.
- While Little League Softball does not mandate formal pitch counts, it is the coach's responsibility to ensure no player is overworked. To foster league-wide growth, we recommend utilizing 2–3 pitchers per game. While a primary pitcher may handle multiple innings, a minimum of 1–2 innings should be reserved for developing newer pitchers. This builds team depth and safeguards our players' long-term arm health.

## 7. Batting

- All players in attendance are placed in a continuous batting order.
- Bunting is permitted
- Dropped 3rd Strike - NOT in effect (ie A player cannot attempt to advance to 1st base if the catcher drops/misses the ball on a 3rd strike.)
- There are no walks. Strikes are called on both player and coach pitches.

## 8. Base Running

- **Run Caps:** Maximum of 5 runs per inning for innings 1-5; the 6th inning (and extra innings) are uncapped. An inning earlier than the 6th can be played as uncapped provided that both coaches agree it is the final inning and they inform the umpire prior to the beginning of the inning
- **Leading:** Runners may lead only after the pitcher releases the ball.
- **Stealing:** Stealing 3rd base only; no additional advance on overthrows.
- **Overthrows:** Runners may advance a maximum of 1 base on any overthrow.
- **Sliding:** As per LL rules, runners are not required to slide, however they are required to try and avoid contact. Head-first sliding is prohibited except when returning to a base.
- **Courtesy Runner:** If the catcher is on base and there are 1 or 2 outs, a courtesy runner must be used. The runner must be the last player who made an out.
- Play ends when the pitcher has possession and is on/near the mound. Base runners must return to previous base if not more than half-way to the next base when play ends. Determined by umpire.

## 9. Addressing Umpires

- **Junior Umpires** (Under 18) - Many of our umpires are children; we as coaches are co-educators teaching them the game alongside our players.
  - Coaches should never undermine or argue with a junior umpire.

- If a junior umpire makes a clear rule error, the head coach may calmly approach the umpire at a natural break in play to offer a "teaching moment" clarification, provided the opposing coach is included in the conversation.
- Coaches are responsible for their parents; any shouting or harassment directed at a junior umpire will result in an immediate warning, followed by spectator ejection.
- **Adult/Professional Umpires** - While we expect a high standard of rule knowledge from adult umpires, we recognize that errors occur.
  - **Rule vs. Judgment:** Judgment calls (balls/strikes, safe/out) are final and may not be challenged.
  - **The Rule Challenge Protocol:** If a coach believes a rule is being interpreted incorrectly (e.g., "The ump says stealing isn't allowed, but the MALL handbook says it is"), the following steps must be taken:
    1. Call a "Time Out" and request a brief conference at home plate.
    2. Both head coaches and the umpire must be present.
    3. The coach should state the specific rule from the MALL handbook they believe is being misapplied.
    4. Once the rule is reviewed, the umpire has the final authority to reverse the call or let it stand for that game.
  - **Post-Game Reporting:** If a rule dispute remains unresolved or an umpire consistently demonstrates a lack of rule knowledge, head coaches must email the League VP within 24 hours. This allows the league to provide formal clarification to all teams and address umpire performance privately.