

## RULES AND UMPIRE 101

### The Rules of Little League Baseball and an Overview of our Umpire Program

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### RULES 101 COVERS THE FOLLOWING:

1. How Our Umpire Program Works
2. The "Game Coordinator" Rule
3. How to Talk to an Umpire
4. Safety During the Game
5. Little League Rules that Differ from MLB
6. Interference / Obstruction / 9.00
7. Our Local Rules
8. Rules Myths

### HOW OUR UMPIRE PROGRAM WORKS

- **Almost all your games will be umped by teens**
  - Each of them has attended classes, and many of them umped last year and the year before
  - We pay them
  - Before we had the Junior program, coaches umped a lot of games, or unwilling parents filled in
  - Last year, we covered over 80% of all umpire slots for all games
- **Umps assign themselves to games**
  - We use the NCAA's <http://www.ArbitersSports.com>
  - I will try to get you all logins so you can see who is signed up to umpire your games
  - If there is no one signed up, you'll have to find volunteers
- Umpires have wide discretion in Little League to enforce the rules and **to ensure good sportsmanship is practiced by all**, including players, coaches, and spectators

### UMPIRE RULES – THE NEW ADULT GAME COORDINATOR RULE

- For insurance reasons, LL has decided every game **must have at least one adult game coordinator (GC). This replaces the adult UIC rule of last year.**
- If no adult ump is on your game, **the home team manager will appoint an adult** to be the game coordinator. This cannot be a coach, but it can be the scorekeeper. The GC doesn't take the field.
- Duties of the GC:
  - **Only the GC can suspend games** for darkness or rain.
  - The GC has to ensure the safety rules are followed, as do the umps.
  - The GC must take action if coaches/players get out of hand – the GC can eject people, and so can the umps.
  - **The GC is not an umpire and cannot make calls nor overrule umpires' calls.**

## SAFETY DURING THE GAME

- **Players do not handle bats in the dugout.** The batter coming up should grab his or her bat when it is time to exit the dugout.
- **Players should remain in the dugout except when they are playing.** Also, make sure players aren't standing in the dugout opening where they could be hit by a foul ball or errant throw.
- **In general, there is no on-deck hitter allowed.** At the beginning of an inning, the first batter of the inning may come out of the dugout with a bat and warm up well away from the plate and any player or coach. But at no other times, not even during a pitching change, can a batter be outside the dugout.
- **All batters and runners wear batting helmets.** Also, any players who are coaching bases must wear a helmet.
- **The catcher must have a cup and a "dangler"** (a throat guard, or Yeager as it is called) attached to his mask, even for hockey-style masks.
- **During warm-ups before the game, the player standing next to the coach who is hitting grounders and flies must have on a catcher's helmet and mask.**
- **Between innings, any player can warm-up the pitcher, but that player must have on the catcher's helmet and mask.** Shin guards and chest protection is not required for warming up a catcher. Adults cannot warm-up pitchers.
- **There must be an adult in the dugout at all times.** If you only have two adults cleared to be there, a player must be a base coach.

## HOW TO TALK TO AN UMPIRE

- **We have a "zero tolerance" policy on umpire abuse**
  - If you yell at an umpire, you will be ejected
  - If players or parents yell at umpires, they will be ejected
  - If you argue judgment calls, you will be ejected
  - **The umps are someone else's KIDS.** Remember that.
- **If you have a question on a call**
  - Ask for and wait to get time, then go to the ump who made call
  - Talk to the ump politely. If you're discussing a judgment call, keep it short. You have more leeway when asking about rules.
  - The ump never has to get help on a call, but you can ask him
  - Don't argue balls and strikes. There is no reason for that.
  - If your players or parents are getting on the ump's case, please stop them. The GC should also do this.
- **If the umpire is wrong on a rules call and polite discussion doesn't change his mind, protest the game**

## LITTLE LEAGUE RULES – ENDING THE GAME

- **All divisions play 5 ½ or 6 inning games**
  - If the home team is ahead after 5 ½ innings, the game is over
- **All divisions use the "Mercy Rule"** – if the Visiting team is ahead by 10 after 4 or 5 complete innings, or if the Home team is ahead by 10 after 3 ½ or 4 ½ innings, the game is over and the umps will leave.
- **If it is too dark or raining too hard for the umpire to see balls and strikes, or if the field is too muddy to play on, the GC should postpone the game**
  - The GC can delay the game and try to wait out a rain shower
  - But, rain or snow alone is not a reason to call a game here – player safety is
- **Time Limits – AAA is different than Coast and Majors**
  - **AAA only** has weekday evening time limits - When a game is being played on a weekday (Mon-Fri) evening, no new inning may begin after one hour thirty minutes of playing time and no pitch may be thrown after one hour and forty-five minutes. **AAA also has time limits on ALL weekend games as below.**
  - **All** on a weekend game *that has a following game if Coast/Majors*, no new innings after 2 hours, and no pitch after 2:20, unless the game is a Coast or Majors game that is tied after 6 innings, then the limits are 2:30 and 2:50 respectively

## LITTLE LEAGUE RULES – OUTS

### The base runner is out in the following situations:

- The **runner does not slide or attempt to avoid** a fielder **who has the ball AND is waiting to make tag** - **7.08(a)(3)**
  - **THERE IS NO "MUST SLIDE" RULE!!! Note the requirements – fielder must have ball and must be waiting to make tag, and even then runner can attempt to go around.**
  - A catcher (or any fielder) blocking the plate (or any base) without the ball who is run over by a runner is most likely **guilty of obstruction.**
  - A runner could be ejected, **but not called out**, for running over a fielder who doesn't have the ball or isn't waiting to make the tag – we don't allow football style takeouts
- **Slides head-first** into a base while advancing - **7.08(a)(4)**

## LITTLE LEAGUE RULES – LEAVING EARLY (7.13)

**F1 on rubber, F2 ready - runners may not leave their base until a pitched ball reaches the batter.**

If violated in BASEBALL (in Softball, the runner is out):

- **If a play is made on the runner**, the play continues. If the runner is put out, the out stands; if the runner is safe, *all* runners back.
- **If the batter gets a hit**, the play continues until action stops, then runners are sent back as far as possible, with the batter getting the hit value if safe.
- **If an error or ball stays in infield**, batter gets first only, and all runners return as far as possible
- **But, you can't stop a runner who is advancing with this rule.**

## LITTLE LEAGUE RULES - PITCHER

- **There are no balks in Little League 12U**, but we can call illegal pitches at the Majors and Coast level.
- There is the extensive rule (8.05) that lists all of the ways in which a pitch is illegal.
  - Note that **most illegal pitch types apply only when there is a runner on base**
  - **Quick pitching and pitching from off the mound are always "illegal pitches"**
- **Regulations specify pitch-count restrictions**
  - **Ages 11-12 – 85 pitches** per day max (unless during a batter); **9-10 – 75 pitches** per day; **7-8 – 50 pitches** per day
  - Days of rest – 66+ is 4 days of rest, 51-65 is 3, 36-50 is 2, 21-35 is 1, and 20 or less is 0
  - Catcher **who catches 4+ innings can't pitch** the rest of that game. Pitcher **with 41+ pitches can't catch** that game.

## INTERFERENCE

**Any action by an offensive player that "obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play."**

- **Runner is hit by batted ball:** Runner out; dead ball.
- **Runner collides (even slightly) with a fielder** making play on batted ball: Runner out; dead ball.
  - **Base runners must avoid** a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
- **Runner intentionally impedes a player's attempt to throw the ball** to make a play: Runner out, *and possibly* the other runner is also out; dead ball
- **Runner intentionally slaps away tag:** runner out; dead ball.
- **Batter intentionally or through willful neglect interferes with play at the plate: runner out; dead ball** – unless third out, then batter is out
  - But batter is not required to have eyes in the back of his head, just to back away from plate as runner comes in

## OBSTRUCTION

"... a **fielder** who, **while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball**, impedes the progress of any runner" – **2.0, 7.06**

- **Type "A" Obstruction - 7.06(a):** When a **play is being made on obstructed runner:** dead ball; award base as appropriate
- **Type "B" Obstruction - 7.06(b):** **When a play is not being made on obstructed runner:** *delayed* dead ball; award base as appropriate
- **Base Award:** The base runner is awarded the base which, *in the umpire's judgment*, the runner would have attained had the obstruction not occurred.
- **If obstructed while returning to a base** (as on pick-off play), **the runner is always awarded the next base.**

## INFIELD FLY

... a **fair fly ball** (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt) **which can be caught by an infielder *with ordinary effort***, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are out. (2.00, 6.05d, 7.08f)

- **The Conditions**
  - **No outs or one out**
  - **Runners R1, R2 OR, bases loaded**
  - **Infield pop-up (not blooper, and never a bunt)**
- Umpires **point and call**: "Infield fly, batter out"
- The force is removed; runners can stay on their bases even if ball is dropped
- **IFR is NOT enforced at the AAA level.**

## LOCAL RULES

- **All: CBO, Mercy Rule, < 9 Players is a forfeit** (but you can still play the game with pitch counts)
- **AAA and Coast: 4 True Outfielders**
- **AAA:**
  - **Pitching** --ALL kid pitch, just like Coast and Majors!
  - **Batting/Running**
    - **Bunting is NOW allowed!**
    - **Stealing 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> is NOW allowed!**
    - **Stealing of home is not allowed even if a play is being made on a stealing runner**
    - **There is no "within 50 feet of mound" rule anymore to stop base runners. You have to play on them.**

## UMPIRE RULES – WHO CALLS WHAT

- Each umpire has his or her **own area of responsibility**
  - Plate ump calls balls/strikes, plays at home, fair/foul, etc.
  - Field umps call plays at their bases
- **Never, ever should two umpires make a call on a play**
- After a play is over, **an umpire can choose to get help** on a call from his or her partner and then maybe change the call
- **NO UMPIRE, ADULT OR JUNIOR, CAN OVERRULE ANOTHER UMPIRE, even if that ump was wrong**
  - This is a rule, just like 3 strikes and you're out.

## RULE MYTHS PART I – ALL FALSE!

- The hands are considered part of the bat.
- The batter-runner must turn to his right after over-running first base.
- If the batter breaks his wrists when swinging, it's a strike.
- If a batted ball hits the plate first it's a foul ball.
- The ball is dead on a foul-tip.
- The batter who batted out of order is the person declared out.
- The batter may not overrun first base when he gets a base-on-balls.
- If the batter does not pull the bat out of the strike zone while in the bunting position, it's an automatic strike.
- The batter-runner is always out if he runs outside the running lane after a bunted ball.
- A runner is out if he slaps hands or high-fives other players, after a homerun is hit over the fence.
- Tie goes to the runner.
- The runner gets the base he's going to, plus one on a ball thrown out-of-play.
- Anytime a coach touches a runner, the runner is out.
- The runner must always slide when the play is close.
- The runner is always safe when hit by a batted ball while touching a base.
- A runner may not steal on a foul-tip.

## RULE MYTHS PART II – **ALL FALSE!!!**

- It is a force out when a runner is called out for not tagging up on a fly ball.
- An appeal on a runner who missed a base cannot be a force out.
- A runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball.
- Runners may not advance when an infield fly is called.
- No run can score when a runner is called out for the third out for not tagging up.
- A pitch that bounces to the plate cannot be hit.
- The batter does not get first base if hit by a pitch after it bounces.
- If a fielder holds a fly ball for 2 seconds it's a catch.
- You must tag the base with your foot on a force out or appeal.
- If a player's feet are in fair territory when the ball is touched, it is a fair ball.
- The ball must always be returned to the pitcher before an appeal can be made.
- With no runners on base, it is a ball if the pitcher starts his windup and then stops.
- If a fielder catches a fly ball and then falls over the fence it is a homerun.
- The ball is dead anytime an umpire is hit by the ball.
- The home plate umpire can overrule the other umps at anytime.

## QUESTIONS