



2021 Local Rules

The Zionsville Little League is governed by the official regulations and playing rules for all divisions of Little League baseball or softball (www.littleleague.org.) Rules described in the official regulations will always apply unless a specific local rule described in this document modifies the rule.

Managers are expected to download the Little League® Rule Book App to their personal smart phone/device. Information about the app can be located at <https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/little-league-rulebook-app/> or you may search on the app store supporting your device.

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I. General Rules (Apply to All Divisions)

- a. Teams
 - i. Roster size per team determined depending on number of players registered.
 - ii. Number of teams in divisions determined depending on number of players registered.
 - iii. Division format determined by ZLL.
 - iv. Additional players may be added to rosters until all rosters are full or first games are played.
 - v. ZLL may discontinue receiving registrations after deadline.
 - vi. Players registering after rosters are filled shall be placed on a waiting list.
 - vii. Player evaluation and team selections, either league assignment or manager draft, are determined by ZLL.
- b. Safety
 - i. If lightning is observed, play shall be stopped immediately, and all players removed from field and dugouts until 20 minutes after last sight of lightning. DO NOT FINISH BATTER OR INNING.
 - ii. Officer of the Day is responsible for declaring the stoppage of games due to lightning and determining when play can be resumed following a delay.
- c. Team Responsibilities
 - i. Home team is responsible for preparing field before each game.
 - ii. Visiting team is responsible for field maintenance after game (Make sure mound and batter's boxes are filled and tamped down so they are level and flat.)
 - iii. Home team will provide a responsible person to operate scoreboard (if appropriate.)
 - iv. Home team scorebook is official record and visiting team should compare scorebooks after each inning.
 - v. Both teams are responsible for trash pick-up around dugouts and bleachers after every game, but visiting team is ultimately responsible for post-game condition of playing field and all surrounding areas.
 - vi. Managers and coaches shall not attempt to influence or intimidate umpires. Any of this activity should be brought to the immediate attention of the Division Commissioner, VP of Baseball/Softball or Umpire Officer.
 - vii. Managers are responsible for conduct of their team's parent's behavior toward umpire and opposing team. If inappropriate conduct continues during game, play is expected to stop, and behavior addressed before play is resumed.
- d. Uniforms & Equipment
 - i. Any player not in uniform shirt matching team color shall not be allowed to play (exception if player is added after season begins or uniform has not arrived by first game of season.
 - ii. All uniform shirts must always be tucked in.
 - iii. Balls provided by league will be official balls of each game.
- e. Games
 - i. Game may not start with fewer than seven (7) players. If at game start a team does not have seven (7) players, they forfeit game. Game may be rescheduled due to lack of players but must be done in at least two (2) hours in advance of start time.

- ii. Each team is to play with only players on their roster. If team has less than seven (7) players available from their roster under no circumstances can you play with a player from another team's roster without prior approval from Division Commissioner or VP of Baseball/Softball.
- iii. Each team must bat at least eight (8) batters in their lineup. If a team only has seven (7) players, they will be assessed an out each time eighth position is due up in batting order.
- iv. All players present bat in the batting order.
- v. Batting order provided at beginning of game (remain unchanged except as noted below.)
- vi. Players absent at start of game but arriving late becomes last batter in the batting order.
- vii. Player removed from batting order due to illness or injury shall not result in an out unless removal brings line-up to less than eight (8) players.
- viii. Manager/coach may warm-up pitcher between innings if catcher is not ready and available.
- ix. Game times will be set at time of scheduling and any team not on field ready to play at scheduled time will forfeit game.
- x. Division Commissioner or VP of Baseball/Softball is responsible for rescheduling postponed or incomplete games.
- xi. Games started and postponed due to weather resumes at point game was interrupted.
- xii. Mercy rule applies after 4 innings (3½ innings if home team is ahead), when one team leads by 10 or more runs, team with least runs shall concede victory to opponent. (Note: If visiting team leads by 10 or more runs, home team must bat in its half of the inning.)
- xiii. Games with score tied after six (6) innings ends as a tie unless in a tournament game.
- xiv. Every player on a team roster will participate defensively each game for minimum of six (6) outs, regardless of whether game is shortened by a mercy rule.

II. Baseball Divisions

a. All Divisions

- i. Unlimited defensive substitution allowed for all positions except pitcher.
- ii. Each player must play a total of two (2) different positions and one (1) of the positions must be in the infield.
- iii. Player may not play same position more than three (3) consecutive innings, except for a pitcher and catcher.

b. Minors A

- i. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes time limit whichever occurs first. If time limit is reached, any at-bat previously started may complete and game ends when active at-bat is finished.
- ii. Games played with coach pitch method.
- iii. Pitching coach must avoid all contact with ball and players and must leave playing field while ball is alive. If, in umpire's judgment, interference by pitching coach was

intentional, lead runner is out. If interference is unintentional, it shall be ruled as a dead ball and batter is awarded first base.

- iv. Pitching coach shall not direct the batter/runner in any way.
- v. Maximum of six (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes count as an at-bat.
- vi. At-bat shall not end on a foul ball.
- vii. No walks.
- viii. If player does not swing at 6th pitch, player is ruled out.
- ix. Player may not play catcher more than three (3) innings per game.
- x. Pitcher's-helper shall stand on one side of coach pitcher and even with or behind pitching rubber.
- xi. Pitcher's-helper shall wear a face mask.
- xii. Baserunner can advance multiple bases on any ball batted into the outfield so if the ball remains in the grass.
- xiii. Runners will not be allowed an extra base on any defensive overthrow.
- xiv. No stealing or leadoff, runners may not leave base before ball is hit.
- xv. Each team can field a total of ten (10) players - six (6) infielders and (4) outfielders - and outfielders must start with both feet in the grass area until the ball is hit.
- xvi. Outfielders cannot make any play for an out at a base, may not tag any runner in the infield and must transfer ball to an infielder before an out can be made via force out or tag.
- xvii. Two defensive coaches allowed in outfield when team is on field and should be positioned in foul territory near left and right field foul lines.
- xviii. Run limit of five (5) runs per inning for all innings.
- xix. Infield fly is not in effect.
- xx. Dropped third strike rule is not in effect.

c. Minors AA

- i. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes time limit whichever occurs first. If time limit is reached, any at-bat previously started may complete and game ends when active at-bat is finished.
- ii. Player may not play catcher more than three (3) innings per game.
- iii. Games played using pitching machine method.
- iv. Pitching machine to be setup at forty-six (46) feet with the speed dial on setting 6 (~37mph)
- v. Pitching coach must avoid all contact with ball and players and must leave playing field while ball is alive. If, in umpire's judgment, interference by pitching coach was intentional, lead runner is out. If interference is unintentional, it shall be ruled as a dead ball and batter is awarded first base.
- vi. Pitching coach shall not direct the batter/runner in any way.
- vii. Maximum of six (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes count as an at-bat.
- viii. At-bat shall not end on a foul ball.
- ix. No walks.
- x. If player does not swing at 6th pitch, player is ruled out.
- xi. Pitcher's-helper shall stand on one side of coach pitcher and even with or behind pitching rubber.
- xii. Pitcher's-helper shall wear a face mask.

- xiii. Baserunner can advance multiple bases on any ball batted into the outfield so if the ball remains in the grass.
- xiv. Runners will be allowed to advance one base on any defensive overthrow.
- xv. No stealing or leadoff, runners may not leave base before ball is hit.
- xvi. Each team can field a total of ten (10) players – six (6) infielders and (4) outfielders – and outfielders must start with both feet in the grass area until the ball is hit.
- xvii. Outfielders cannot make any play for an out at a base, may not tag any runner in the infield and must transfer ball to an infielder before an out can be made via force out or tag.
- xviii. Two defensive coaches allowed in outfield when team is on field and should be positioned in foul territory near left and right field foul lines.
- xix. Run limit of five (5) runs per inning for all innings.
- xx. Infield fly is not in effect.
- xxi. Dropped third strike rule is not in effect.

d. Minors AAA

- i. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes time limit whichever occurs first. If time limit is reached, any at-bat previously started may complete and game ends when active at-bat is finished.
- ii. Games played with hybrid method of machine and player pitch. The season begins with a 2-4 hybrid pitching (first two (2) innings kid-pitch, remaining four (4) innings or time limit machine pitch), games will move to 3-3 hybrid starting mid-May, and change to full kid-pitch at start of division tournament.
- iii. Pitching machine to be setup at forty-six (46) feet with the speed dial at setting 6 (~37mph)
- iv. If pitcher has combination of five (5) hit batters and/or walks in an inning, pitcher must be removed after hitting or walking fifth batter.
- v. Each batter will start with a 1-1 count.
- vi. Pitching coach must avoid all contact with ball and players and must leave playing field while ball is alive. If, in umpire's judgment, interference by pitching coach was intentional, lead runner is out. If interference is unintentional, it shall be ruled as a dead ball and batter is awarded first base.
- vii. Pitching coach shall not direct the batter/runner in any way.
- viii. Pitcher is permitted a total of 5 warm up pitches between innings.
- ix. Player may not play catcher more than four (4) innings per game.
- x. Outfielders must start with both feet in the grass until the ball is hit.
- xi. Run limit of five (5) runs per inning for innings one (1) through three (3). Runs are unlimited innings four (4) through six (6).
- xii. Dropped third strike rule is not in effect.

e. Majors Division

- i. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes time limit whichever occurs first. If time limit is reached, any at-bat previously started may complete and game ends when active at-bat is finished.
- ii. Player may not play catcher position more than four (4) innings per game.
- iii. Pitcher hitting three (3) batters in an inning must be removed.
- iv. Pitcher is permitted a total of six (6) warm up pitches between innings.

- v. Outfielders must start with both feet in the grass until the ball is hit.
- vi. Run limit of five (5) runs per inning for innings one (1) through three (3). Runs are unlimited innings four (4) through six (6).

f. Intermediate (50/70)

- i. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and forty-five (45) minutes long whichever occurs first. If time limit is reached, any at-bat previously started may complete and game ends when active at-bat is finished.
- ii. Player may not play catcher position more than four (4) innings per game.
- iii. Pitcher hitting three (3) batters in an inning must be removed.
- iv. Pitcher is permitted a total of six (6) warm up pitches between innings.
- v. Outfielders must start with both feet in the grass until the ball is hit.
- vi. Run limit of five (5) runs per inning for innings one (1) through three (3). Runs are unlimited innings four (4) through six (6).

III. Softball Divisions

a. All Divisions

- i. Unlimited defensive substitution is allowed for all positions except pitcher.
- ii. Each player must play a total of two (2) different defensive positions and one of the positions must be in the infield (exception: if player is "playing up" from lower division, they are not required to play the infield.)
- iii. Player may not play same position more than two (2) consecutive innings, except pitcher and catcher.
- iv. Player may not play catcher more than three (3) innings per game, unless game goes to extra innings, catcher previously playing three (3) innings may return.
- v. Protective facemask required for all defensive players, both infield and outfielders.

b. Rookies

- i. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes long whichever occurs first. Inning in progress at end of allotted time will be completed. In this case, beginning of an inning starts when the third out or the run rule limit is reached in previous inning. There will be a hard stop at ninety (90) minutes and game will end at that point, regardless of situation or score.
- ii. Each player must play three (3) different positions each game and one position must be in the infield.
- iii. Defensive player in Pitcher's Helper position must have one (1) foot inside and one (1) foot outside Pitching Circle and must be even with or behind pitching rubber before ball is pitched and may not advance forward until ball is hit.
- iv. Pitcher's Helper must wear a Heart Guard.
- v. Pitcher allowed to pitch to the first three (3) batters of each inning. Each team provides pitcher who will pitch two (2) pitches to each batter. Coach will step in and pitch remaining pitches.
- vi. Coaches pitch to their own team from 35' with at least one foot on the rubber when pitch is released.
- vii. Pitching coach must avoid all contact with ball and players and must leave playing field while ball is alive. If, in umpire's judgment, interference by pitching coach was

intentional, lead runner is out. If interference is unintentional, it shall be ruled as a dead ball and batter is awarded first base.

- viii. Pitching coach shall not direct the batter/runner in any way.
- ix. Maximum of six (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes count as an at-bat.
- x. An at-bat shall not end on a foul ball.
- xi. No walks.
- xii. No bunting or slap hitting allowed.
- xiii. If the player does not swing at the 6th pitch, the player is ruled out.
- xiv. Runners may only advance one base if ball is thrown or rolled out of the playing field.
- xv. If fielder's throw to first base is overthrown, then runners may advance one base at their risk and may be thrown out prior to safely reaching the next base.
- xvi. Play becomes dead after an extra base is achieved following overthrow, an out is made, or the ball is put to the pitcher's mound. Once ball reaches the 'atmosphere' of pitcher's mound runners must go back if they have not made it more than halfway to next base. Batting team's manager is judge of halfway and will enforce this with utmost respect for the teamwork spirit of the game. Atmosphere is defined as anything passing to the circle without regard for completion of the catch by the pitcher.
- xvii. No double overthrows are allowed on the same play.
- xviii. Each team can field a total of ten (10) players – six (6) infielders and four (4) outfielders – and outfielders must start with both feet in the grass until ball is hit.
- xix. Outfielders cannot make any play for an out at a base, may not tag any runner in the infield and must transfer ball to an infielder before an out can be made via force out or tag.
- xx. Two defensive coaches allowed in outfield when team is on field and should be positioned in foul territory near left and right field foul lines.
- xxi. Play stops when advancement of lead runner, by any fielder, is stopped. If a runner(s) has not advanced to halfway mark, then runner(s) must return to previous base(s). Time out or stoppage of play is up to umpire and not automatic.
- xxii. No stealing or leadoff, runners may not leave base before ball is hit.
- xxiii. Inning ends when three (3) outs are completed or five (5) run limit is reached.
- xxiv. Infield fly rule is not in effect.
- xxv. Dropped third strike rule is not in effect.

c. Minors

- i. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes long whichever occurs first. Inning in progress at end of allotted time will be completed. In this case, beginning of an inning starts when the third out or the run rule limit is reached in previous inning. There will be a hard stop at ninety (90) minutes and game will end at that point, regardless of situation or score.
- ii. Player may only pitch three innings per game. An inning is defined as one (1) pitch to a live batter and innings do not need to be consecutive.
- iii. Pitcher hitting three (3) batters in an inning, must be removed after hitting third batter. Pitcher can return to the game as a pitcher in a different inning, but that inning will also count as one (1) of three (3) innings pitched.

- iv. Pitcher may issue three (3) walks or a combination of hit batters and walks totaling three (3) in inning (the batter will be awarded 1st Base). Once milestone is met, if pitcher throws four (4) balls, offensive manager or coach will pitch a maximum of three (3) additional pitches. Batter will retain the number of strikes from player pitcher. Batter will then either hit pitch, be out on strikes, or be called out after third pitch from the coach. Rule is for regular season only. (CLARIFICATION: when a coach pitches to a batter with a four (4) ball and zero (0) strike count, batter receives a maximum of three (3) pitches to complete at bat. When coach enters game to pitch to a batter with a four (4) ball & one (1) strike count or a four (4) ball & two (2) strike count, batter also receives a maximum of (3) pitches to complete at bat. If first and second pitches from coach are called balls, batter is entitled to a third pitch. A strikeout at any point during the at bat – either by swinging or by called third strike – ends at bat, regardless of number of pitches thrown by coach.
- v. Pitcher is permitted a total of 4 warm up pitches between innings.
- vi. Coach should warm up the pitcher if the catcher is not ready.
- vii. Batter may not strike out on foul ball. If last pitch by a coach is a foul ball, the batter will receive additional pitches until hits the ball or is struck out.
- viii. There will be a run limit of five (5) runs per inning for innings one (1) through three (3). Runs are unlimited innings four (4) through six (6).
- ix. Infield fly rule is not in effect.
- x. Dropped third strike rule is not in effect.

d. Majors

- i. Games will be six (6) innings or one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes long whichever occurs first, with a hard stop and game will end at that time, regardless of situation or score.
- ii. Player may not play catcher more than three (3) innings per game. If a game goes to extra innings, catcher that has played three (3) innings may return to catch.
- iii. Player may only pitch three innings per game. An inning is considered one (1) pitch to a live batter. The innings do not need to be consecutive.
- iv. Pitcher hitting three (3) batters in inning, must be removed. Player can return to game as pitcher in different inning, but inning will also count as one of three (3) innings pitched.
- v. Pitcher is permitted a total of 4 warm up pitches between innings.
- vi. Player may not play same position more than 2 consecutive innings, except for pitcher and catcher.
- vii. Each player must play a total of two (2) different positions and one position must be infield. Exception: If player is “playing up” from lower division age level, they are not required to play infield.
- viii. Each team can field a total of nine (9) players – six (6) infielders and three (3) outfielders – and outfielders must start in the grass until the ball is hit.
- ix. Run limit of five (5) runs per inning for innings one (1) through three (3). Runs are unlimited in innings four (4) through six (6).
- x. Games tied after 6 innings of play will end as a tie.

e. Juniors

- i. No local rules.

IV. Rule Book Reminders

- a. Clarification of **sliding** into a base. There is no "mandatory" slide rule in Little League.
 - i. **The Runner** (Rule 7.08) -- "Any runner is out when (a)(3) the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag (b) intentionally interferes with a thrown ball; or hinders a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball (NOTE: a runner who is adjudged to have hindered a fielder who is attempting to make a play on a ball is out whether it was intentional or not.)"
 - ii. Umpires are trained to enforce the rule as stated above from the rule book.
 - i. Runner has a choice; meaning "must" or "mandatory" slide is not required.
 - ii. Runner may chose not to slide and instead attempt to get around which does not mean runner must absolutely avoid contact -- contact alone does not make the runner out if in the umpire's judgment, the runner attempted to get around.
 - iii. Attempt is a judgment call by the umpire.
 - iv. Fielder must have possession of ball and be waiting to make the tag for either choice to matter -- if NOT, baseline and base belong to runner.
- b. Clarification of **"dropped" third strike**, does not mean has to actually be dropped.
 - i. **The Batter** (Rule 6.09 (b)) -- "A batter becomes a runner when the third strike is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two out." **Rule only applies in Major divisions and above.**
 - ii. A few points of emphasis:
 1. Pitch does not need to be dropped; it simply must not be caught by the catcher.
 2. While dropped pitch by the catcher is one form of not being caught there are other situations. Most common is a pitch bouncing to the catcher, as this qualifies as not being caught, even if the catcher cleanly catches the pitch on a bounce and with no drop occurring.
 3. Scenarios of a wild pitch or passed ball are other examples where pitch may not be dropped as it was never caught.
 - iii. Rule has note included. (NOTE: A batter forfeits his/her opportunity to advance to first when he/she enters the dugout or other dead ball area.) ZLL umpires are trained to locally interpret **dead ball area** for batter to be outside the immediate area around the plate. For safety reasons, this helps to avoid situations where a batter is moving toward the dugout (and - as often the case - only deciding to run to first base because coaches, players or parents are verbally instructing them to do so) and suddenly takes an unusual path to the base and be in the path of a thrown ball or encounter the next batter approaching the plate with a bat in hand for their turn at bat. The immediate area is the umpire's judgement.
- c. Clarification for interpreting **running out of base path**.
 - i. **The Runner** (Rule 7.08(a)(1)) -- "Any runner is out when - running more than three feet away from his/her baseline to avoid being tagged, unless such action is to avoid interference with a fielder fielding a batted ball. A runner's baseline is established when the tag attempt occurs and is a straight line from the runner to the base to which he/she is attempting to reach." By understanding the correct

reference point, you can now easily see it is completely permissible for a runner to be more than three feet from the straight line between the two bases.

- ii. A few points of emphasis:
 - 1. Runner establishes their **own** base path at time of tag attempt.
 - 2. Runner is unlikely to always run in straight line between two bases, but they might be.
 - 3. Umpire judges if runner runs more than three feet from their individually established base path - straight line from where runner is at time of tag attempt to base attempting to reach.
 - 4. Baseline applies whether advancing to next base or returning to base previously touched.
- iii. Don't forget umpire is also judging if avoiding interference comes in play during situation.
- d. Clarification of **infield fly rule**.
 - i. **The Batter** (Rule 6.05(d)) - "An INFIELD FLY is 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. The pitcher, catcher, and any outfielder stationed in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule." **Rule applies in Minor divisions and above, unless local rule prevails.**
 - ii. A few points of emphasis:
 - 1. When it seems apparent a batted ball will be an Infield Fly, umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly" for benefit of runners.
 - 2. If batted ball is near baseline, umpire shall declare "Infield Fly, if fair."
 - 3. Ball is alive and runners may advance at risk of that ball being caught, or retouch and advance after ball is touched, same as on any fly ball.
 - 4. If batted ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul ball.
 - iii. Bunts popped into air are not covered by the Infield Fly.
 - iv. Umpire judges 'ordinary effort.'
 - v. ZLL local rules prohibit outfielders being stationed as infielders during an at bat. However, it is possible an outfielder may catch or drop an Infield Fly, so long as the Infield Fly can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort.
 - vi. Infield Fly is in effect regardless of umpire declaring verbally or not (it's a rule and players/managers/coaches are expected to know rule and game situation.)
 - vii. Rules for base runners advancing are no different than any other fly ball situation ("run at your own risk" does not change this for Infield Fly.)
 - viii. If a declared Infield Fly falls untouched to the ground, and bounces foul and remains foul before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball.
 - ix. If a declared Infield Fly falls untouched to the ground outside the baseline and bounces fair and remains fair before passing first or third base, it is an Infield Fly.
- e. Clarification of **obstruction** vs. **interference**. These two sets of rules are some of the most complicated and often lead to situational confusion. There are many different types of possible interference situations - yet, only one type of situation defining obstruction. Often obstruction is called "interference" due to the misunderstanding of the difference.

- i. **Obstruction** (Rules 7.06 and 2.00) - "is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. A fake tag is considered obstruction. (NOTE: Obstruction shall be call on a defensive player who blocks off a base, base line, or home plat from a base runner while not in possession of the ball.)"
- ii. A few points of emphasis:
 - 1. Fielder in possession of the ball cannot obstruct a runner, as the fielder is entitled to make a play on the runner.
 - 2. Mere contact between base runner and defensive player may not be judged to be a block -- in judgement the umpire will determine if contact impedes progress of runner.
 - 3. Obstruction does not have to be intentional for it to be called.
 - 4. Obstruction is not an immediate "dead ball", it's considered a delayed dead ball -- with umpire allowing play to finish, and when play is finished umpire calls time to administer any penalty from obstruction.
- iii. **Interference** (Rule 2.00) - "(a) Offensive interference is an act by a member of the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. (b) Defensive interference is an act by a fielder which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting a pitch (typically "catcher's" interference.) (c) Umpire interference occurs when (1) umpire hinders, impedes, or prevents catcher's throw attempting to retire runner, or (2) when fair ball touches an umpire in fair territory before passing a fielder. (d) Spectator interference occurs when a spectator reaches from the out of play area or goes on the playing field and touches a live ball. (e) On any interference the ball is dead. *A few points of emphasis:*
 - 1. Interference does not have to be intentional.
 - 2. Mere contact alone may be insufficient to determine interference. For example, a close play at a base when ball and runner arrive near simultaneously and contact ensues may not be a case for the umpire to judge interference by runner on fielder making an attempt of a play.