

Local Special Rules

Machine Pitch - Rookie & A Divisions

St. Louis Park Little League (Rev: Jan 30, 2023)

Introduction

All intra-league regular season baseball games played by St. Louis Park Little League (SLPLL) are governed by the current Official Regulations and Playing Rules published by Little League Baseball, Incorporated, as clarified or supplemented by these Special Rules. These Special Rules were developed by the Rules Committee and adopted and approved by the SLPLL Board of Directors. These Special Rules are intended to avoid misunderstandings by clarifying rules and procedures and to make the games the best possible experience for the players.

Coaches are expected to be familiar with the Official Regulations and these Special Rules and are encouraged to read through them before the start of the season and during the season as needed. Individual Coaches are not to change the Official Regulations or the Special Rules. Suggestions for changes should be directed to the Rules Committee.

League Regulations

This section covers regulations that are left to the local league to modify or otherwise define.

Regulation III(c) – Age Structure

Rookie Division is for player's league age 5 through 6.

A Division is for player's league age 7 through 8.

Regulation IV(i) – Mandatory Play

Rookie teams have smaller numbers to ensure that kids play the entire game. Rotate positions every inning.

A Division

Managers/Coaches are required to use the Game Lineup Spreadsheet found on the website under Coaches - Resources - Lineup.

Players in a team's lineup for a game will play:

- A minimum of 12 defensive outs for each 6 defensive innings, with
- A minimum of 6 defensive outs played in the infield, and
- A minimum 3 defensive outs played in the outfield;
- No player shall sit twice before all player's have sat at least once.
- No player will play more than 2 innings at any one position during a game.
- If a team is fielding 9 or more players for a game, no player may play more than 2 consecutive innings in the infield or the outfield.

Spirit of the Rule

1. Abraham play's 2 innings at 3rd base, he must now go to the outfield for 2 innings or bench for at least one inning.
2. Jenny play's 2 innings in the outfield, she now must either go to the bench/infield. If Jenny goes to the bench for 1 inning she must come back into the infield/catcher/pitcher for at least 1 or 2 innings. Only then can she return to the outfield.

Most players will play

2-3 innings within the infield

1 Bench

2-3 innings within the outfield

Note: If a player does not meet the minimum requirements due to a shortened game, then in the next game the Manager should get that player into the game early enough to meet the minimum requirements for that next game. Managers are trusted to use their best efforts to abide by the spirit and letter of these rules.

Regulation V(c) – Player Substitutions

Rookie Division - no substitutions needed.

A Division

Little League has extended to all Divisions the option of allowing the Player Agent to create a list of players willing to participate in extra games during the regular season when teams face a shortage of rostered players for a regular season game.

- Requests should be made no less than 48 hours before scheduled game time.
- Coaches cannot request a specific player; the Player Agent assigns the next available player, treating the list in a round-robin manner.
- A Manager cannot request a substitute player unless the team is expected to be down to 10 players or fewer for a game.
- Once a substitute is assigned, the substitute player must play even if the player being replaced is able to play.
- The substitute player is subject to the same minimum playing time as all other players, with the exception of the following: a substitute player cannot pitch and must bat at the end of the batting order.

Local League Rules

Local rules are created for and apply to cases in which the official Little League rulebook either allows or fails to prohibit local autonomy to clarify and implement.

Rule 1.11 – Uniform

During the course of a game, all players' shirts must be tucked in. All players must wear a black belt and a SLPLL hat during the game. Hats and belts are available for sale at the concession stands.

Rule 4.03 – Player Positions

Rookie teams have smaller numbers to ensure that kids play the entire game. Rotate positions every inning.

A Division - 10 fielders allowed

Managers/Coaches are required to use the Game Lineup Spreadsheet found on the website under Coaches - Resources - Lineup.

- A minimum of eight players is required to play a game.
- Only six infielders are allowed.
- Extra player is a fourth outfielder.

Rookie & A Division

- All outfielders must start at least 15 feet behind the bases (in the grass) until the ball is hit.
- All infielders should be positioned with both feet on the dirt and out of the baseline.
- Aggressive players should be instructed to play their position and let the other kids play theirs.
- Force/tagouts can only be made by an infielder at their normal fielding position.
- If a ball is hit to the outfielder, the outfielder cannot run to the base to touch/tag the base/runner for an out. They must throw the ball to an infielder.

Spirit of the Rule

1. Abraham is playing 1st base with a runner on 2nd and nobody out, he catches a line drive for an out, he cannot run to 2nd base to tag the base/runner. He has to throw to another infielder covering 2nd base to get the out.
 2. Jenny is playing right center with a runner on 1st and nobody out, a ground ball is hit up the middle that she fields, she cannot run to 2nd base to tag the base/runner she has to throw to an infielder covering the base.
- The pitcher may stand no closer to home plate than the pitching rubber with one foot on the dirt and one foot in the grass. They must be positioned BEHIND the release point of the machine.
 - A catcher should be provided every inning and should wear a catcher's mitt and squat behind home plate.
 - Use your judgment and make sure that it is safe for the player
 - Cup/athletic supporter are required

Rule 4.04 – Continuous Batting Order

Rookie & A Division - SLPLL will adopt the option of using a continuous batting order, as described in rule 4.04.

- The batting order need not remain the same from game to game.
- During the regular season, each player should have the opportunity to bat in various spots in the order.
- The lineup given to the scoring booth before the game must list only players that are present at the start of the game. If a player arrives late to a game (after the first pitch is thrown), that player must be added to the end of the lineup.
- There shall be NO on-deck batter.
- Between innings, only the player coming up to bat is allowed to take practice swings and should be in the presence of a coach for safety reasons.
- Only bats with the USA stamp are allowed (examples below).



Rule 4.10(e) – 10-Run Rule

Rookie Division - runs and outs are not recorded.

- All players bat during each half inning with the last batter that inning hitting a “home-run” and circling the bases.
- Beginning on June 15th, if a player gets out while running the bases, they will return to the dugout. All players still bat during each half inning.

A Division

SLPLL will use the 10-run rule as described in Rule 4.10(e).

Rule 5.07 – 5-Run Rule

Rookie Division - runs and outs are not recorded. All players bat during each half inning with the last batter that inning hitting a “home-run” and circling the bases.

A Division

- A maximum of five runs may be scored in one inning.
- If five runs score in an inning, that inning is over regardless of the number of outs.
- The inning is over as soon as the 5th run crosses the plate, except in the case of an out-of-the-park home run, in which case all runners and the batter will be allowed to score.
- The 5-run rule does not apply in the top and bottom halves of the last inning.

Rule 7.08(a)(3) -- Sliding

Rookie & A Division

For the purposes of 7.08(a)(3), sliding is not required, but any intentional or repeated contact made between the runner and the fielder will be considered a failed attempt to avoid the fielder, and the Umpire may call the runner out. Although there is no “must slide” rule, SLPLL encourages Coaches and Managers to teach the kids to learn how to slide and to slide whenever in doubt. This can prevent injury as well as other potential rules issues that may arise. Unintentional contact should be used as a coaching point at these levels.

Rule 7.13 -- Stealing and Base Running

Rookie & A Division

- No leading off.
- Base stealing is not allowed and runners may not advance on overthrows, passed balls, or wild pitches.
- A player may not advance on an errant throw to the pitcher after a pitch.
- The infield fly rule is NOT in effect.
- Uncaught third strike rule is NOT in effect.
- Base runners may tag-up on a fly ball to the outfield only.
- Running out of the baseline (6 ft wide) should be used as a coaching opportunity unless intentional and blatant or a second offense by the same player.
- Obstruction and interference calls should rarely be called. Rather they should be used as a coaching opportunity unless intentional and blatant or a second offense by the same player.
- Runners may continue advancing on balls hit to the outfield until the outfielder(s) successfully returns the ball to the infield. A ball hit to the outfield is “successfully returned to the infield” when it crosses the line where the outfield grass and infield dirt meet. Runners must stop at the next base they are advancing to at that point.

Spirit of the Rule

1. The Ball is in the outfield and Danny is running from 1st to 2nd base. Jacob throws it into the infield before Danny reaches 2nd but Danny continues running to 3rd base. The play has ended and the runner should be told to return to 2nd base. If he is tagged out going to 3rd base he is out.

Bunting: Bunting is not allowed.

Rule 4.05 – Coach Positions and Responsibilities

Rookie & A Division

- Managers and Coaches are not allowed in the infield (except for the coach from the batting team that is operating the pitching machine).
- Defense can have up to two coaches on the field - one in LF and one in RF each responsible for positioning of the players on their half of the field. Coaching should be limited to reminding players to get into ready position and asking players what they're going to do if the ball comes to them.
- Manager/Coach may go to the batter's box to help the batter with his/her batting stance.
- In-game coaching (fielding or batting) should not interfere with the pace and speed of the game.
- Managers must exchange team rosters and batting orders with each other prior to the start of the game.
- Optional - submit a copy to the Press Box prior to the game.
- If the field is not set up for play, at least 1 coach from each team is required to help. You can also ask parents to help.
 - Remove tarps and weights
 - Chalk lines and batter's box
 - Install bases
 - Setup and adjust pitching machine
 - (8 power pedal, 3 release arm block, 3 micro adjustment)
 - The only adjustment needed should be the back leg of the machine for left/right adjustment or the spring that the ball rests on. To adjust the ball up, turn the spring that the ball rests on counterclockwise. To adjust the ball lower, turn the peg clockwise. This should NOT be done to individual batters, but on the initial setup at the beginning of the game.
- Post-game (**BOTH TEAMS**) -
 - Pickup garbage in dugouts
 - Place bases in shed
 - Rake and level around bases, home plate and pitcher's mound.
 - Rake from grass to dirt along baselines to prevent lips.
 - Place tarps and weights on home plate/pitcher mound
 - Lock all gates and score booths and return keys to shed
 - Close the shed

Rule 9.01(a) – Umpires

Rookie Division - runs and outs are not recorded.

A Division

SPLLL will not be providing umpires for Machine Pitch baseball games. Umpires will be the coaches of the 2 teams playing.

- Fielding team will provide an umpire positioned at the backstop responsible for:
 - fair/foul calls
 - non-pitches (outlined in 9.04)
 - put-outs
 - help with passed balls to speed up the game
- If there is no backstop coach/umpire,
 - the pitching machine coach will be responsible for put-outs & non-pitches (outlined in 9.04)
 - fair/foul calls will be the responsibility of the 1st & 3rd base coaches
- Umpire (backstop or pitching machine coach) is responsible for final call and should confer with coaches closest to the play on close plays
 - 1st base coach for any calls involving 1st base or the 1st baseman
 - 3rd base coach for any calls involving 3rd base or the 3rd baseman
 - The pitching machine coach for any calls involving 2nd base or the 2nd basemen & shortstop
 - Left field outfield coach for any calls involving the left fielder or left center fielder
 - Right field outfield coach for any calls involving the right fielder or right center fielder
 - If only one outfield coach they are responsible for any call involving all 4 outfielders

Rule 9.04(a) - Pitching/Pitching Machine

Rookie & A Division

- See pitching machine settings under **Coach Positions and Responsibilities** above.
- The pitching machine coach will stand on the mound and place the ball into the pitching machine.
- Indicate a pitch by raising and lowering an arm prior to pulling release lever.
- When a batted, deflected or thrown ball hits the pitching machine it is a dead ball.
 - The batter is awarded first base and all other runners advance one base if forced or attempting to advance.

Rookie Division

- Each batter will get 3 pitches from the machine.
- The batter should be instructed to swing at all pitches over the plate..
- If the 3rd pitch is fouled off, the batter will repeat the 3rd pitch process.
- If no contact is made after the 3rd pitch, the player hits off of a tee.
- Since outs are not recorded, runners continue to run even if they get out.

A Division

- Each batter will get at least 5 pitches unless there are 3 swinging strikes which results in a strikeout.
- The batter should be instructed to swing at all pitches over the plate.
- Regardless of the pitch count, the batter is *required* to swing at the 5th pitch, resulting in either a strikeout, a put-out, or reaching base safely.
- If the 3rd strike or 5th pitch is fouled off, the batter will repeat the 5th pitch process.
- If after 5 pitches the batter has yet to swing, he/she is out.
- Obvious pitches out of the strike zone or in the dirt do not count towards the pitch count.

Spirit of the Rule

1. Abraham is batting and he swings and misses at the first pitch which bounces before homeplate, this pitch should not count toward either the 3 swinging strikes or 5 pitches.
2. Jenny is batting and she swings and misses at the fifth pitch which is a little high, she is out as this pitch still counts as a swinging strike and the 5th pitch.
3. This is meant to be used sparingly and only for egregiously bad pitches.

Time Limits

Rookie games are one hour. No inning shall begin after :45 from start time. At the start of the season, you may only get through two innings in your hour of play. As the season progresses and the kids get used to everything, you can attempt to play a third inning and reduce the number of pitches from the machine to two (one if you're really pressed for time) for that third inning if need be.

A Division

- No inning shall begin after 1:30 from start time.
- The last inning shall be declared, if possible, 1:15 after the start time.
- The last inning starts when the last out is made in the previous half inning.

Regulation X(a) – Night Games

No new inning will start after 9:40 pm. Lights at Skippy MUST BE OFF BY 10:00 pm. An inning starts the moment the third out is made in the bottom of the preceding inning.

