



Minor League Rules

(3rd & 4th grade)

The official Little League baseball playing rules will be the main source or guide to govern play. The following guidelines have been adopted by the LZBSA Board of Directors to incorporate and enhance the Little League rules.

Program Goals:

At the 3rd & 4th grade (9 & 10-year-old) level, player/participant goals should be relatively simple:

- A. Develop: *Teach the game; A player's skills should improve from the beginning to the end of the season*
- B. Respect: *Be respectful of team mates, opponents & the umpires*
- C. Compete: *Do your best/ Play hard; Managers should begin to teach winning and losing with grace*
- D. Have Fun: *One great measure of success – do the players return the next year?*

1.0 Manager, Coach & Team Responsibilities:

- A. All managers and on field coaches (including in dugout scorekeepers) will be required to complete a Manager/Coach/ Field Assist Form and pass a background screening prior to the start of the season. (Forms & background screen info can be found on the LZBSA website).
 - i. The agreement stipulates guidelines that include, but are not limited, to manager/coach responsibility and the conduct of players, rule violations, disciplinary action, equipment, knowledge of playing rules, LZBSA responsibilities, etc.
 - ii. During the season, all Managers and/or head coaches are responsible for their team. A team includes coaches, players and parents, as outlined in the agreement.
 - iii. The position of manager is a privilege retained for one baseball season. At the completion of the season, each manager's performance will be reviewed by the league president. Recommendations for future manager assignments are made by the league president and approved by the LZBSA Board.
- B. Managers have responsibility for their players while on the field. During the season (including any preseason team training), starting with practices, Managers must make sure that there is no fighting, bullying, swearing, arguing with umpires or opponents, throwing of equipment, or engaging of any unsportsmanlike conduct.
- C. **Field Care Responsibilities:** Every Manager, and his team, are responsible for field care and maintenance and ensuring our LZ baseball facilities, including dugouts, are well maintained.
 - i. After each practice & game managers, coaches, players and parents should complete some light maintenance to ensure the field is playable for the next team(s). This includes:
 - a. Light raking around pitcher's mound and batter's box – fill in holes; add water & tamp down when/where possible.
 - b. Use field drag on the baselines and in the base paths – smooth out for groundballs & base runners.
 - c. Between games only – freshen up baselines and batter's box when chalk is available.
 - ii. After practice & games, dugouts should be cleaned of trash and debris before you leave the field. Please make sure the players help with this.
 - iii. If you are the last team on the field for the day, once the field maintenance is complete, please return field tools to the equipment boxes and lock it for the night.



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1.1 Good Sportsmanship Responsibilities (Managers/Coaches/ Parents & Players):

- A. Managers, coaches, players and parents shall exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. Any action to taunt, intimidate or degrade opposing managers, coaches, players, parents or umpires will not be tolerated.
- B. Swearing by managers, coaches, players or parents, on and off the field, during games or practices, will be strictly prohibited. Violations during a game will result in immediate ejection.
- C. **Arguing with umpires will not be tolerated**. If violated, managers, coaches, players or parents may be ejected and subject to disciplinary action. The Minor League is an instructional league. Please be patient with everyone involved.
- D. **Remember, many times the umpires are kids, too.** They are learning and will make mistakes!
 - i. Influencing the umpires (for example, yelling "safe" or "out" before the umpire makes a call, or yelling "good pitch" before the umpire makes a call) or openly questioning or complaining any umpire's call will not be tolerated.
 - ii. Judgment calls by the umpire cannot be argued. All umpire decisions are final.
 - iii. Rule interpretation questions can be discussed between innings, with both Managers present. These can be teaching moments for young umpires.

1.2 Minor League Structure:

- A. The number of teams will be determined by the number of registered players. LZBSA creates teams that are a combination of 3rd and 4th grade children (typically 9 and 10 years old).
 - i. However, should league enrollment exceed 16 teams, with a reasonable balance of 3rd and 4th grade players, LZBSA may consider splitting the teams by grade level.
- B. The schedule and number of games to be played each year will be determined by the league president.
- C. All players are asked to participate in a tryout prior to team selections (usually in January or February). These evaluations will assist the Managers in trying to create competitive balance within the league.
- D. Team selections are completed through a basic draft process. LZBSA uses a "snake" approach to player selection, where each Managers chooses players one by one until all registered players are selected (e.g.; Snake Draft round selections are Team #1 thru Team#10, then, Team#10 back down to Team #1; continuing until all players are chosen). Draft order is randomly assigned on the day of the draft.

1.3 Complete, Called or Suspended Games:

- A. All Minor league games are planned for 6 innings. If the score is tied, extra innings can be played as long as time limits are not exceeded.
 - i. Games can end in a tie if time limit is reached or the game is stopped (weather/darkness) after regulation innings have been played.
- B. The time Limit for each game is 2 hours. No new inning will start after the 2-hour mark has been hit
 - i. The umpire will note the game start time at first pitch – Manager should check with umpire for the time.



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- ii. A new inning is considered to start as soon as the last out (of the previous inning) has been made.
- iii. For safety, all games must end at dusk (or dark) on fields without lights.
- iv. No time limit will be used for playoff and All-star games.
- C. A game is considered a regulation game if one of the following has occurred:
 - i. 4 innings have been completed;
 - ii. If the home team has scored more runs in three or three and a fraction half innings than the visiting team has scored in 4 completed half innings;
 - iii. If the home team scores one or more runs in its half of the fourth inning to tie or win the game. If the home teams is ahead after 3 ½ innings (the visitor has batted 4 times) the game is official and subject to time and weather.
 - iv. If a game is called after the start of the 5th inning, any partially completed inning will not count, unless the Home team scores one or more runs in its half of the inning to tie or win the game.
 - v. If time limit is reached and the home team is ahead, due to pitch counts, the home team does not have to bat to complete the game.
- D. If a game is called and it is not a regulation game (i.e., one of the requirements in part C above is not met), the game will be rescheduled and start over from the beginning.
- E. **Lightening:** Most LZBSA Fields have lightening detection systems. If the warning siren goes off (or lightening is spotted in the distance), the game will be immediately stopped. Players and coaches will immediately retreat to safety (e.g., car/building). The lightning detection system will also provide an all clear alert (3 shorts blasts from the siren). Once heard the game can resume.
 - i. On fields without lightening detection, if lightening is spotted play must be stopped immediately and players must leave the field to seek shelter. For each future lightning strike, the clock restarts. After 30 minutes with no lightening spotted, play can resume. If lightning is sighted again (after the 30 minute period), the game shall be called. See Little League Book for more detail.

Game Play

2.0 Field Size:

- A. The distance between bases shall be 60 feet
- B. The distance between the mound and home plate shall be 46feet.
- C. The distance from home plate to 2nd base is 84 feet, 10 inches.

2.1 Game Balls & Official Scorekeeper:

- A. Each Manager will supply a new or lightly used little league approved baseball for each game. These are provided to each team by the league at the start of the season.
- B. Managers **should not** give out game balls to players as MVP awards after each game. Please keep these for practice balls and return at the end of the season.
- C. The Home team is the official scorekeeper for each game. Each team is encouraged to check with the other team frequently throughout the game to ensure consistency. However, if there is a discrepancy, the Home team's book will be the deciding factor in resolving the issue.
- D. Lineups should be exchanged prior to first pitch.
- E. Final score and pitch counts are to be reported to the league at the conclusion of each game.



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2.2 All Play Rule - Continuous Batting Order - Field Participation

- A. All players present for the game shall be listed in a continuous batting order. The batting order is in effect for the entire game. All players must bat in their position in the order, whether or not they play in the field.
- B. Each manager will submit a listed batting order, including player name and number, to the opposing team manager prior to the game.
 - i. Players arriving late to the game must be placed at the end of the batting order and play a proportionate amount of innings.
- C. If a player leaves before the end of a game, that player's position in the batting order will be eliminated and such elimination will not constitute an out.
 - i. **Exception:** if a player is ejected for any reason, subsequent at bats for that player are outs.
- D. No player shall sit on the bench (sit out) 2 full innings (unless due to injury or illness) during any game before every other player on the team has sat at least one full inning. In other words, no player shall sit their second inning until every player has sat their first inning.
 - i. In the spirit of fair play all team members should play roughly the same number of innings during each game and throughout the season, including playoffs.
- E. **Courtesy Runners** are allowed for catchers (only for the player who will be putting on the equipment during the next defensive inning) once there are two outs. The Courtesy Runner will be either the last batted out or, if in the first inning, the last player in the lineup.
 - i. On hot days (≥ 90 degrees), if both Managers agree, a Courtesy Runner can be provided for the pitcher after the 2nd out. This must be the pitcher of record – not a player coming into the game to pitch.

2.3 On Field Defense – Infield Participation

- A. Each player must play at least one (1) inning at an infield position **AND** (1) inning at an outfield position during each game.
 - i. **Exception:** If a Manager feels a player is at risk or there is safety issue with playing an infield position (1st, 2nd, 3rd, SS, C, P), the Manager must discuss this with the child's parent in advance and provide the reasoning. Opposing coaches should also be alerted to the situation prior to first pitch.

2.4 Five (5) Run Rule:

- A. Except for the 6th inning or any extra innings of a game, only five (5) runs may be scored by each team in each inning. Upon scoring the fifth run, the umpire will declare the play dead and the defensive team will leave the field.
- B. During the 6th inning of a game and in extra innings, the five (5) run limited will be lifted. However, no batter can come to bat more than one (1) time in an inning. (*Exceptions to this rule: see below Bi & Bii*)
 - i. **Regular Season:** If teams of unequal roster size are playing, then both teams will be allowed to bat an equal number of batters in the sixth and all extra innings. The number of allowed batters will be equal to the **larger** roster.
 - ii. **Playoff Exception:** The regular season batter limit used during the 6th inning is lifted in all extra innings.
- C. If the game is shortened to less than 6 innings due to time limit, or for any other reason, the five run limit will remain in place during the last inning played.



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2.5 Dead Ball / Dead Play Rule:

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- A. Base runners may not advance beyond the base they are headed toward once the defensive team has returned the ball to the pitcher, and the pitcher is on the mound. The umpire will ask the runner to return to the previous base if he is not passed halfway between bases, when the ball reaches the pitcher on the mound.
 - i. If the pitcher makes a play on the runner by throwing the ball, the runner may advance one (1) base.
 - ii. If there is a live ball from a hit and the runner keeps running, and the fielders keep attempting to throw the runner out with over throws or missed catches, the runner can continue to run all the way home. The only way to stopping the runner is to get the ball to the pitcher or get the runner out.
- B. Delayed steals (steals when catcher is throwing the ball back to the pitcher) will not be allowed. When the catcher is throwing the ball back to the pitcher, the play is considered dead. The umpire will be responsible for determining whether a delayed steal has occurred.

2.6 Wall at 3rd Base:

- A. There will be two (2) runs allowed per inning by stealing of home plate or advancing on wild pitches and passed balls. After 2 runs are scored, runners must score through a play on the field -- after a batted ball or by a walk or hit batter.

2.7 Tagging Up to Advance & Stealing (General Base Running):

- A. Players can tag up on a fly ball and advance to the next base.
 - i. A player advancing incorrectly may be put out by a defensive play. Base runners who incorrectly arrive at a base safely will be sent back to the previous base.
- B. Players may not advance to 2nd base after a walk. They player will be returned to 1st base.
- C. Stealing bases is allowed.
 - i. No lead offs are allowed.
 - ii. After a pitch, the runner may lead off or attempt to steal but only after a pitched ball has crossed home plate.
 - iii. If a play is made on the stealing runner and the ball gets away from the fielder the runner cannot advance an extra base. No runner may advance beyond the base they are going to.
 - iv. A base runner may only steal one base per batter. Once the at bat ends and a new player comes to bat they can attempt to steal another base. This rules also applies to a runner trying to steal home. Additionally, if runner steals third base and there is an overthrow by the catcher, the runner cannot advance home, the one base per batter rule applies.

2.8 Sliding on a Close Play – No Contact Rule:

- A. All players must avoid contact when running the bases, except when sliding.
- B. A base runner not complying with this rule will receive one warning and an automatic out (at the umpire's discretion, an ejection can occur on the first offense, should the umpire deem it appropriate).
 - i. A 2nd offense by any player on the same team, during the same game, will result in an out and an automatic ejection of that player.
- C. Head First Slides are only permitted when returning to a base, after having previously reached that base safely. Any player that violates this rule will be called out.

2.9 Bunting: Bunting is allowed.

- A. For safety, **Fake Bunts are not allowed**. A fake bunt is when the batter squares off to bunt, but pulls back and swings at the pitched ball. Any batter who attempts a fake bunt, whether they make contact



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or not, will be immediately called out. This is a Dead Ball Play. If runners attempted to advance they must return to their previous base

2.10 Infield Fly Rule:

- A. The Infield Fly Rule will be in effect during all Minor League games.

2.11 Pitching Rules:

- A. A pitching week runs from Monday – Sunday. Pitchers are limited to pitching 2 Innings Per Game.
- B. Any player on a team's roster can pitch. Borrowed players are not allowed to pitch.
- C. One inning pitched = one day rest
- D. Two innings pitched = 2 days rest. These are days of rest not hours. So, if a player throws 2 innings on Thursday, then they cannot pitch on Saturday.
- E. Managers are expected to adhere to these guidelines for each game.

LZBSA Pitching Guidelines

Player/League Level	Per Game MAX	Weekly MAX Pitches	Days of Rest		
			1 day	2 days	3 days
9U - 10U (3 rd & 4 th grade)	2 Innings	2 Inn Per Game	One Inning Pitched	Two Inn Pitched	n/a
11U - 12U (5 th -6 th grade)	60	100	25-35 pitches	36-50	51-60
13U -14U (7 th & 8 th Grade)	70	125	31-42 pitches	43-54	55-70

- F. Once a pitcher leaves the game he cannot return as a pitcher (he can play other fielding positions).
- G. For rained out and make up games, pitching eligibility remains as highlighted in the LZBSA Pitching Guideline table. No exceptions should be made.
- G. While LZBSA does not typically suspend games, should there be a suspension, a pitcher who has already recorded pitches in the contest will not be allowed to pitch again in that game unless 1) they are the pitcher of record at the time of suspension and 2) they have not exceeded the current week's pitching guidelines.

2.12 Balks:

- A. No balks will be called at the Minor league level.

2.13 Batters Hit by Pitcher:

- A. If a pitcher hits two (2) batters in one (1) inning, that pitcher must be removed from the mound.
- B. If a pitcher hits three (3) batters in a game, that pitcher must be removed from the mound.

2.14 Visits to the Mound:

- A. A pitcher is allowed no more than 2 visits to the mound (by any combinations of managers, coaches, parents, etc.) during any one inning. On the 3rd visit he must be removed, as a pitcher, from the game.



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- i. A visit constitutes any of the above mentioned persons from the defensive team stepping across the foul lines onto the playing field during the defensive teams half inning. **Note:** For the purposes of a coaches visit, the defensive team's half inning starts after warm-ups are completed and the first pitch has been thrown.
- ii. A pitcher throwing multiple innings is not allowed more than 3 visits to the mound during a game. On the 4th visit he must be removed.
- B. If an injury occurs, a mound visit will not be charged. Any questions are resolved at the umpire's discretion.

General Safety Guidelines

Managers and Coaches have a critical responsibility for the safety of their team's players and the families that attend LZBSA baseball games.

3.0 Bat Requirements:

- A. All Bats must comply with the following guidelines to be used in games or practices:
 - i. Bat must not be longer than 33" long
 - ii. All non-wood bats must be stamped/printed with a BPI (Bat Performance Indicator) of 1.15 or less (see image on last page of Minor League Rules if you have questions).
 - iii. Its barrel must not exceed two and three-fourths (2 3/4) inches in diameter
- B. While there will be no official bat check completed by an umpire, Managers have responsibility for reviewing its team's bats to ensure league guidelines are being adhered to.
 - i. Managers should conduct a bat review when spring practices begin. If a bat is out of compliance he should remove it from the dugout and speak to the child's parents.
 - ii. Ongoing Responsibility: during the season, should the Manager identify a new team bat (at a game) the Manager should review its specs.
- C. Wood Bats are allowed. If taped, the tape length cannot exceed sixteen inches (16") up from the handle (starting at the small end – the handle -- of the bat).

3.1 Minor League (3rd & 4th grade) Common Sense Guidelines:

- A. To ensure player and fan safety, players are not to swing their bats outside the field (within the fences only). The coaching staff is expected to monitor this.
- B. Any player warming up a pitcher (on the field or in the "bullpen") must be in full catcher's equipment.
- C. Any offensive player, on the field, must have a helmet on at all times, starting when they leave the dugout (on deck, at bat, or on base).
- D. All players, especially catchers, should be wearing a protective cup while on the field.
- E. Players must wear proper shoes (tennis/gym shoes or plastic/rubber baseball cleats) to participate in games and practices. Metal cleats are not allowed.
- F. All players must remain on the bench if they are not playing in the field or taking their turn at bat. They should be paying attention to the game and not running around.
 - i. Coaches must keep their players out of the dugout doorway and off the field (when not hitting or playing defense) to prevent players from being hit by foul balls or errant throws.
- G. Only the players and coaching staff (inclusive of scorekeeper) are allowed on the bench.



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* **Bat Performance Factor Stamps** (must be printed on all non-wood bat to be used during games & practices)

