

# Bellaire Little League

## Texas League Division

### 2009 Ground Rules

#### 1. Game Period

Each division will produce game schedules each season. Refer to the attached game time-line to determine when teams report for field preparation, batting practice, pre-game conference, etc. Official game start is the scheduled start time. The game will end at the earlier of the conclusion of 6 innings or one hour and forty minutes. No new inning will start after one hour twenty minutes (1:20) after the official game start time. A new inning begins when the 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the prior half inning is made. The game will end after one hour and forty minutes (1:40) after commencement of play. If the game is not completed as of that time, the score will revert back to the immediately preceding completed inning unless the home team is at bat and (a) the home team is ahead at that time (in which case the home team wins) or (b) the home team has come back to tie (in which case the game is recorded as a tie). A game becomes regulation after 3 complete innings. Any game called before regulation will resume at the point of stoppage, unless the 1<sup>st</sup> inning has not been completed (in which case the inning will be disregarded and the entire game replayed). Games ending in a tie will be credited as a half (.5) win and a half (.5) loss. Each team must be ready immediately after each inning to play defensively or offensively. NO STALLING - have your catcher ready!!!

#### 2. Field Preparation

The home team is in charge of preparing the field for play. This will be completed 45 minutes prior to game time. After the last game, the home team is responsible for dragging the field and locking up all equipment.

#### 3. Rosters

Nine(9) players are needed to start/continue a game. Games will be rescheduled if the minimum number of players is not met. A maximum of 10 players shall be permitted in the field on defense. Defensive players may be placed anywhere within the field of play, except as follows: one player shall be placed at the catcher's position, one player shall be placed at the pitcher's position as required by GR #16, not more than four additional players may be placed at infield positions (i.e. within that area of the field bounded by and including the two baselines and the arc at the back of the infield delineated by the edge of the outfield grass and the infield dirt) subject to the proximity-to-batter limitations of GR #17, and the remainder of the defensive players shall be stationed anywhere in the outfield (see GR #18 below).

#### 4. Player Rotation

No player may sit two (2) consecutive defensive innings, and must start and finish each inning played (subject to exception for injuries or disciplinary action). Each player on the game roster shall during each game and in no event later than the conclusion of the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) inning play one full inning at an infield position (does not include catcher position) and at least one (1) full inning in an outfield (O) position (includes catcher position; for purposes of these player rotation rules, catcher shall be considered an outfield position, with the intent being to encourage the development of catchers among the more developed players and speed the game). Additionally, no player may sit two (2) defensive innings until all players on the game roster have been out of the lineup for one (1) defensive inning. In assigning players to infield position managers should seek to place each child, to the extent reasonably possible in sole judgement of manager, in position(s) where excessive exposure to risk of injury to the child is lessened, given such factors as age, ability, size, weight, agility, quickness, and playing experience of the child. The Executive Committee of the League will consider special exemptions, on a case by case basis, from the requirement for the minimum one inning of infield play (only) for players whose parents submit a written request to the League requesting that their child not be required to play an infield position each game. If these regulations are not complied with for any reason, except injury or illness, said player/players must start the next game and play the entire game, consistent with this

paragraph. If these regulations are not complied with for any reason, except injury or illness, Managers will be subject to review and possible disciplinary action by the League, which may include suspension from League play.

## **5. Substitutions; Batting Order**

There are free substitutions for all players. Continuous batting order will be used.

## **6. Run Limit**

There will be a 5 run limit in all innings including the last.

## **7. Stealing**

After the first strike (swing), players are allowed to steal 2<sup>n</sup> and 3<sup>r</sup> bases only. The players may not leave their base until the ball reaches home plate. Players CANNOT steal home or advance past base stolen on any over throw on a steal or any continuation of a play after a steal. Any runner who attempts a steal before they are entitled to steal (i.e., before the batter's first strike) is at risk of being put out. Runners not put out on an improper attempted steal will be returned to the base occupied at the start of such play.

## **8. Continuation/Termination of a Play**

After a ball has been put into play from the machine, the ball shall be live until the earlier of the point at which the pitcher has control of the ball with at least one foot in the pitching circle at the conclusion of the play or the ball has otherwise become "dead" in accordance with the Little League Rules and/or these ground rules, at which time the umpire will call "time" and play will be stopped. However, in the umpire's judgment, the pitcher has control of the ball and in one continuous motion throws in an attempt to put out an advancing base runner, the umpire will allow the play to continue. Runners not advanced past halfway chalk line will return to base last touched.

## **9. Pitches**

Batters will receive four (4) hittable (umpires discretion) pitches. Wild pitches, unless struck at by the batter, will be called a "no pitch" and will not count in the total pitch count; provided, however, in recognition of the instruction which batters may receive that they must swing at the last pitch, the umpire may call a "no pitch" on the last pitch for a batter even though the batter struck at the pitch if the pitch otherwise would have been called a "no pitch." The batter will be called out on the earlier of the third strike (swinging) or the fourth pitch (if not fouled off or hit in play). Foul balls on and after the fourth pitch will get another pitch and so on. Umpires will announce the count after the 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch.

## **10. Sliding**

NO head first sliding while advancing to base! The runner will be called out. Runners must either slide or attempt to avoid contact with the defensive player when advancing to a base. Runners who initiate contact with a defensive player without sliding or attempting to avoid may be called out at the umpire's discretion. However, - the runner generally has the right to the baseline. Under the definition of "Obstruction" if the fielder is in the baseline without possession of the ball the defensive player may be guilty of obstruction. See Rule 2.00 "Obstruction" and Rule 7.06.

## **11. On Deck**

There is no on deck in Little League.

## **12. Dugout**

During game time there will only be 4 coaches allowed in the dugout area, 1 manager and 3 coaches. The home team will occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side and visitors will occupy the 1<sup>st</sup> base side. The manager and coaches will remain on their side of the field during the game. Coaches should be behind the dugout fence or in coach's box no further down than the *Vi* way chalk stripe. No food or beverage will be allowed in the dugout except for water or sports drinks (except in cases of medical necessity).

### 13. Pitching Machine

The pitching machine will be set at 38 mph. Only a coach or manager of the offensive team may feed the machine. Coaches shall not intentionally manipulate the pitching machine to cause wild pitches, including situations in which base runners are in position to steal bases. Any violation of this rule will be cause for ejection from the game and from the teams next physically played game. The pitching coach shall not instruct batters or runners while play is in progress.

### 14. Batters

All batters must wear protective helmets with facemasks.

If a batter is injured during an at-bat and can not continue the at-bat, **the next batter in the lineup** comes up and **continues** the at bat. He does so with inherit ball/strike count. Furthermore, when it is time for that player who was injured to bat again and he is still unable to do so, he is skipped, disregarding any batting out of order rule.

### 15. Catchers

All male catchers must wear a cup at all times while they are catching. If the catcher for next inning is on base and there are 2 outs or 4 runs have been recorded in the inning, the catcher must be replaced with the player that made the last out.

### 16. Pitchers

All pitchers must wear a protective helmet with facemask while on the mound. All male pitchers must also wear a cup while on the mound. Pitchers must have at least one foot inside the pitching circle and behind the front legs of the pitching machine until the pitch is released. **Penalty:** First a warning. Second offense will be treated as defensive interference, Rule 6.08(c)

### 17. Infield Play

Infielders may not position themselves or advance toward home plate inside the half-way chalk lines until the pitch is released.

### 18. Outfielders

All players on the field occupying or assigned to any of the outfield positions must begin and remain in the outfield grass during play. **Penalty:** The ball shall be declared "dead" at the moment of the infraction (i.e., outfielder coming into the infield in possession of the ball or to make a play or assist in making a play on the ball) and the umpire shall award one base to all runners from the last base legally acquired as of the moment of the infraction. **Exception: If an outfielder comes into the infield or foul ground to catch a fly ball or backing up 1<sup>st</sup> base on an overthrow.**

### 19. Infield Fly Rule

There is no infield fly rule in Texas League.

### 20. Ball Strikes Pitching Machine or Pitcher Coach; Interference

If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine or the electrical cord prior to striking or being touched by any person on the field (including the pitcher coach), the ball is dead; batter-runner advances to first base and other runners advance, if forced, to the base to which they are forced. If a batted ball strikes a fielder (other than the catcher) or the pitcher coach and is deflected into the pitching machine or electrical cord, the ball is alive and in play. For a batted ball first striking runner, then deflected into the machine or pitcher coach - ball is dead/alive as determined under Rules 5.09(f), 7.08(f), 7.09(m) with respect to the ball's initial contact with the runner. For batted ball caught by pitcher coach or lodged in pitcher coach clothing the batter is out.

If any thrown ball strikes the pitcher coach or any portion of the pitching machine or the electrical cord, the ball is alive and in play. For thrown ball caught by pitcher coach or lodged in pitcher coach clothing, the ball is dead. If the pitching coach interferes with a play or does not make a reasonable attempt to get

out of the way or avoid interfering with a play, interference may be called and the runner or runners may be called out.

## 21. Appeals

A team may appeal a play after the ball is dead. To perfect the appeal, the manager may make the appeal to the umpire or the pitcher may request and obtain possession of the ball for the appeal while in the pitcher's circle, then step out of the circle and make the appeal to the umpire.

## 22. Scorekeeping

The home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook. *<Scorekeeper is also responsible for charting both teams defensive positions each inning to insure each player has had an opportunity to play both infield and outfield.>* Both managers and the umpire must sign the score book after the game.

## 23. Sportsmanship

The manager and coaches shall not leave the bench or dugout except to confer with the umpire and only after receiving permission from the umpire to do so. The manager is responsible for the behavior of his team, coaches, and fans. PLEASE SET A GOOD EXAMPLE!!!!

## 24. Game Results

The home team manager is responsible for calling or emailing the League Rep, with same results within 24 hours after completion of the same.

## 25. Fake Bunts

Batters are not allowed to fake bunt then swing away. If a batter "shows" bunt, their options are, (a) bunt, (b.) offer or not offer at the bunt attempt, or (c) pull the bat back taking the pitch. Penalty: the ball becomes dead at the moment of the infraction and the batter is out. No runner may advance.

## 26. Thrown bats

A batter shall be called out when after hitting the ball and before reaching first base, he or the bat in any way touches the ball while in fair territory. If, in a game a batter throws or wildly slings his bat after hitting (or attempting to hit) the ball to the extent, that his coach and/or umpire believes other players are endangered, time-out will be called and the coach will discuss the infraction with the batter. If it happens during the game again, the batter will automatically be called out and/or ejected.

## 27. Dead Ball Area

The following areas at Horn and Carter Fields will be considered "Dead Ball" areas: (I) All areas outside a line along the first and third base fence lines beginning with the last fence post of the sideline fence along the baselines and extending to the last (nearest) fence post of the outfield fence; and (II) the pitchers and catchers "cutouts" of the bullpen area along the first base side of Horn Field [defined by a straight line from the 6 foot fence post to the 4 foot fence at the entrance to each area at the front of the pitcher and catcher cutouts.]

## 28. Home Run.

A batted ball that hits the painted yellow line or yellow fence protector, and stays in the field of play is considered a "live ball." A batted ball must go over the fence, in flight while over fair territory to be considered a home run. In the event that fences do not define the field of play and are replaced by traffic cones and/or painted lines, a home run must clear the cones/line in flight. A batted ball that bounces or rolls through the cone/line will be a two base award.

## 29. Reschedules

Games will be made up as determined by the scheduler.

## 29. Weekly "Touches"

During the regular season, except for rainouts and other rescheduled games, each team will be limited to not more than (3) two touches per week. A touch is defined as a game or practice, or any other time when a manager or coach, together with 2 members of a team (other than family members of the manager or

coach) are together for the purpose of baseball instruction, practice or play in any one given day, without prior BLL board approval. **Fall League only:** Except for rainouts and other rescheduled games, each team will be limited to not more than (2) two touches per week.

### **30. Tobacco, Alcohol & Profanity**

The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the playing field, benches and dugouts. Smoking is not permitted on League facilities. The use of alcoholic beverages or profanity is prohibited anywhere at the League's baseball complexes.

### **31. Intentional Delay or Otherwise Making a Travesty of the Game**

Players, managers, coaches, parents, or observers making a travesty of the game will not be tolerated. If it is in the opinion of the umpire that any player, manager, coach, parent, or observer is making a travesty of the game, said individual or individuals shall be immediately ejected from the game and required to leave the game site and the game shall be replayed from the point of infraction without regard to the outcome of any play which occurred during or as a consequence of the offending conduct; provided, however, that if, in the judgment of the umpire, the offending conduct was engaged in by a player due to youth or inexperience, the offending player may be issued a warning for the first infraction. Causing players to intentionally perform poorly (including intentionally striking out, intentionally being put out, intentionally failing to record an out, or intentionally making wild pitches or throws) for the purpose of extending or shortening a game, or otherwise engaging in any action whose purpose is to manipulate the time or duration of the game (including repeated and unwarranted timeouts or replacement of players (including catchers)), shall be considered making a travesty of the game. Willfully and knowingly disregarding the requirements of these Ground Rules and other applicable rules also shall be considered making a travesty of the game. In addition to ejection, additional penalties (up to and including forfeiture of a game and/or disqualification of the team, managers or coaches from further league or tournament participation) may be imposed if, in the opinion of the Disciplinary Committee of the Board of Directors of the League, such additional penalties are warranted in light of the offending conduct and other relevant considerations the Committee may consider in its judgment.

**All other rules are Official Little League rules.**

## **Post-Season Tournament**

To the extent there is a post-season tournament scheduled, the following additional rules shall apply unless otherwise amended by the League Representative or the Vice President of Operations of the Board of Directors of the League, who shall be the Tournament Official.

1. Except as reflected below, all games shall be played based on the Texas League ground rules and applicable Little League Rules, with no exceptions or changes. The first game of the day will start when the schedule indicates; subsequent games will start 20 minutes after the conclusion of the proceeding game or at the time the schedule indicates, whichever is earlier.
2. Seeding will be based on regular season records (other than in the Fall, in which case the League Representative will determine seeding). In the event of a tie, ties will be resolved (a) first head-to-head and (b) second by coin toss.
3. Highest seed to elect Home or Visitor.
4. Except as stated below, there shall be no time limits for any tournament game.
5. Instead, the mercy run rule of 4.10(e) is in effect for the tournament, i.e., if after four innings (3 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> innings if the home team is ahead) one team has a lead of 10 runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. The Championship Game mercy run rule will be 15 runs after 3 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> innings. Note: If the visiting team has a lead of 10 (15, for the Championship Game) runs or more, the home team must bat in its half of the inning.

6. All games shall be completed before 10:00 PM, and shall be considered final if it has become a regulation game under Rule 4.10(c); provided that no game shall end in a tie. Tie games shall be continued until a winner is determined in accordance with the Rules.
7. For any game, a player may not be out of the defensive line-up for more than one (1) consecutive inning, and must start and finish each inning played (subject to exception for injuries or disciplinary action). If this rule is not complied with for any reason, except for injury or illness, said player/players must start the next game and play the entire game and the Manager is subject to discipline, up to and including forfeiture of the game. Each team will be allowed unlimited (open) substitutions.
8. A maximum of 5 (five) runs may be scored by each team in each of the first 3 (three) innings of a game. Specifically, the home and visitors teams may each score up to 5 (five) runs in their respective half of each of the first three innings of each game. After three (3) innings, the number of runs that may be scored in each half inning is unlimited.