

Naperville Little League

Rookie League Rules

These local rules (NLLB) along with Little League Baseball's 2024 playing rules are the official rules for all Naperville Little League regular season games. City tournament rules may be different.

The Rookie League is an instructional league. Rookies Division (A and AA) game scores are not recorded and league standings are not kept. Winning games is not the goal. Having fun and improving baseball skills are the goals. All players, commensurate with their ability, must be given the opportunity to play all positions and given equal opportunity to start half of the games.

Age Rules

1. There are two different divisions in Rookie Division ball. Rookies A is for first graders and Rookies AA for second graders.
2. A Manager and three (3) coaches are allowed inside the confines of the field. One coach must be the designated catcher backup while on offense. The same individual can be used in the field while on defense. He must remain behind the infielders at all times. See Rule 24.

Equipment

1. All male catchers are required to wear a protective cup.
2. All catchers must use a catcher's mitt.
3. All bats used must display the USA Baseball logo.
4. All helmets must be NOCSAE approved.

Pitching – (Rookies A - all season)

1. Rookies A uses the pitching machine all season.
2. Placement of the machine is 6' in front of the 46' pitching plate.
3. There is a maximum of 6 pitches thrown from the machine. After 6 pitches, batter is out. A foul ball on pitch #6 does not count towards the 6-pitch maximum. On the 6th and subsequent pitches if the ball is fouled off the batter continues to bat until he swings and misses or puts the ball into play. An errant pitch (declared by the umpire) does not count towards the 6-pitch maximum.
4. A batted ball that hits the machine is a dead ball. Batter is awarded 1st base and runners advance one (1) base if forced.

Pitching – (Rookies AA Only second half of the season)

1. In Rookies AA, kids pitch in the second half of the season. Umpires will keep the count and batters can strike out, Walk or be Hit-By-Pitch as in normal baseball. In the first half of the season a pitching machine is used.
2. There is a maximum of 6 pitches thrown from the machine. After 6 pitches, batter is out. A foul ball on pitch #6 does not count towards the 6-pitch maximum. On the 6th and subsequent pitches if the ball is fouled off the batter continues to bat until he swings and misses or puts the ball into play. An errant pitch (declared by the umpire) does not count towards the 6-pitch maximum.

3. The batter can strike out after swinging at strike three at any point in the at bat. Also, a batter can strike out on a called 3rd strike by the umpire before the 6th pitch.
4. Any player who has played the position of catcher in four innings in a game is not eligible to pitch on that calendar day. (One pitch equals one inning played).
5. A pitcher once removed from the mound cannot return as a pitcher.
6. The manager must remove the pitcher when he/she reaches the maximum of 50 pitches. If the pitcher reaches the maximum while facing a batter, he/she may continue to pitch until the batter is retired, reaches base or the 3rd out is made in the inning.

Games – Rookies A and AA

1. Games will be a maximum of 6 innings No new inning may start after 1¾ hours. If the time limit is reached during an at bat, the game ends when that batter is retired or reaches First Base.
2. A continuous batting order will be used.
3. A five-run rule is in effect. The side is retired when three offensive players are legally put out or when the offensive team scores (5) runs in the half inning.
4. There is no Infield Fly Rule.
5. During machine pitch, there are no Walks and no Hit by Pitch.
6. There is no dropped third strike rule.
7. Bunting is not allowed. A bunted ball will be called dead and a strike recorded on the batter.
8. Base runners may not steal bases. Runners may only advance on a batted ball, or a walk. A batter hit by pitch (2nd half of the season only) will be awarded first base. All runners advance one base.
9. Overthrows to retire a runner will be administered as follows:
Runners may only advance one base (at their own risk) on an overthrown ball regardless of where the overthrow occurs. The runner's position at the time of the throw determines his/her base award. One base is allowed for the entire play.
10. On batted balls, when a throw from the outfield reaches the infield, runners will be allowed only to reach the base they are advancing to. Even on an overthrow to the infield.
11. The Strike Zone is VERY generous. It is defined as shoulders to knees and as wide as two baseballs on each side of home plate.
12. Managers are encouraged to have players play different positions each inning. Players shall not sit out two innings in a row. An inning is defined as three consecutive outs.
13. There are an unlimited number of defensive substitutions during the game.
14. The defensive team may place four (4) players in the outfield (Rookies A Only). These outfielders must be positioned approximately 20 feet beyond the bases in the outfield grass at time of pitch. The 4th outfielder may not be placed in the infield.
15. Managers shall exchange batting orders for each game, consisting of all eligible players in attendance at the start of the game. If a player arrives late to a game, he/she shall be added to the end of the batting order (if there were 10 on the original lineup, the late player bats in the number 11 spot on the original lineup).
16. Suspended games due to weather, darkness or curfew will be resumed subject to Rule 4.11(a-d).

17. Each player will bat in his/her spot, regardless of his/her status in the defensive lineup. If a player is removed from the game due to illness or injury, his position in the batting order is skipped and the next batter shall bat. No out is recorded. If the player in question returns to the game, he/she shall be inserted back into his/her original position in the batting order.
18. Pinch runners are allowed for the catcher at any time. When there are two outs, a pinch runner for the catcher is mandatory. A pinch runner may also be used to replace an injured player. The player who made the last out shall become the replacement runner.
19. When "timeout" is requested by a manager or coach, they may not leave the dugout or coaching box until "timeout" is granted by the umpire. Note: a manager or coach saying "timeout" does not make it so. Only when the umpire grants "timeout", does it happen. The offensive team is allowed only one time out each inning.
20. There is no "must slide" rule in Little League Baseball. Runners must slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag. Runners do not have to slide if no play is being made at the base.
21. Batter throwing the bat. A safety warning shall be given to the batter and the team manager. After the warning if that batter throws the bat a second time, that player is removed from the game. The batter is not called out. The play will finish and then the player is removed (not ejected) from the game. If, for instance, he hits a double and two runs score: the runs count and the player is replaced at second with the player who made the last recorded out. If the incident occurs during an unfinished at bat, the player is removed and the next batter will bat and assume the current ball/strike count. The manager shall instruct the team in the proper method of discarding the bat after the ball is hit.
22. In the Rookie League, it is legal to play with any number of players without penalty.
23. Speed-up Rule. The offensive team will supply a coach to stand in front of the backstop with a glove to retrieve any errant balls that get past the catcher. **This is a non-verbal coaching position and this person is not allowed to direct the defensive team or influence the umpire in anyway.**

Games - Rookies AA Only

1. Hit by Pitch is in effect for Rookies AA only in the second half of the season when kids pitch. All runners advance one base.
2. Walks are allowed until the bases are loaded during the second half of the season when kids pitch. Once the bases are loaded, the kid player pitches to the next batter until he reaches ball four. Then an adult manager/coach for the offensive team will pitch to the current batter until he/she puts the ball in play or strikes out. The coach must pitch from the pitcher's plate. The coach may stand or kneel to throw the pitches. Either way his pivot foot must be in contact with the pitcher's plate. There are no Walks or Hit-By-Pitch when adults pitch.

NLLB reserves the right to make any changes in these rules and division structures as the Board of Directors deems necessary.