

LAFa Farm League Game Guide for 7-8 Year Olds

Objective

Meet three times a week. Once a week for an off-site practice (North/South School) and twice a week for games. Since Farm introduces a practice during the week, more time can be spent on game play. The first 20 minutes of each game is for drills, followed by game play. Saturdays will be expanded to offer more game play. Keep it fun while trying to teach the kids some baseball skills.

Drills

Weekday games should start with about 20 minutes of drills. The teams should be integrated during the drills at each station. Before the first station, teams line up along each foul line and work on throwing drill as a team. The stations are quick and rotate every 5 minutes: Hitting (Home Plate) to Pop Ups (Outfield) to Grounders (2nd Base). At the Farm level, fielders use their gloves versus the paddles.

Starting in May, the Saturday sessions will be simplified to leave more time for the game. We are recommending about 15 minutes of team warm up first with the throwing drill, followed by a quick ground ball station.

Farm League Game Play Guidelines

Roughly 60-70 minutes, as many innings as time allows.

Infield Dimensions

- 35 ft pitching distance (back of Home Plate to front of Pitchers Rubber)
- 45 ft distance between bases

Pitching

- Coaches pitch to their own team for the first four (4) games.
- Coaches pitch the first inning only from the fifth (5th) game on.
- Players are pitching starting the 5th game, 2nd inning
- After four (4) balls (walk) coach pitches until ball put in play or 6 pitches.
- Players pitch from the Pitching Rubber (35 feet)
- Pitchers start in a “windup” with both feet in contact to the rubber.
- At the beginning it’s okay to have them move up a step or two to 33 feet, but no more than that for safety concerns.
- No pitcher may pitch more than three (3) innings in a week (Monday – Sunday)
- Replace the pitcher if three (3) batters are walked in a row.

Game Play Basics

- Safety soft-core (Level 5) ball
- Continuous Batting Order will be used at all times
- 10 players (or full team) in the field at actual positions, spread them out. If more than 10 kids no kid may sit out more than 1 inning per game.
- Rotate players defensively at each position each inning/game.
- All players must play equal time in infield and outfield each game (exception is Pitcher and/or Catcher)
- Outfielders stay on outfield grass, infielders normal depth behind the base paths.
- Try to teach them to “play their position”
- Coaches should be on field with players to instruct
- No leading or stealing
- No advancement on bases on any throwing errors.
- Baserunners can continue to current base but stop when the ball reaches infield.
- Shoulders to Knee Strike Zone, about six (6) inches to either side of the plate (encourage kids to swing).
- Coaches can decide what to do about strikeouts, but in past they’ve been outs.
- Emphasize outs are part of the game, and all players are out more than safe.
- No standings are kept, and there are no Playoffs
- **Catcher MUST wear all catchers gear (including cup) while catching in the game or warming up a pitcher.**

Weekday (and Saturdays thru April) Game Play

- Start with drills for about 20 minutes
- 1st Inning
 - All players bat and play the field (extra players in outfield).
 - Coach Pitch (6 to 8 per player).
 - Batter that strikes out should run to first base.
 - Base-to-base advancement.
- 2nd Inning on
 - Starting on 5th game kids pitch, otherwise coach still pitches.
 - 4 balls is a walk – have coach pitch about 6 pitches so the batter can hit
 - Ball put in play can result in an out
 - If still not put in play, kid runs to first
 - 3 strikes is an out – (coach can pitch until ball put in play)
 - Inning ends after 3 outs or 5 runs.
- Team in the field should provide a Coach to Umpire (or ideally find a parent)
- No new innings after 7:45 PM

Saturday (Starting in May) Game Play

- Starting first Saturday in May
- Simplify pre-game warmup down to 15 minutes.
 - Start with playing catch along each Foul Line focusing on proper mechanics and showing a good target/catching the ball.
 - Coaches then choose how to warm up kids, “infield”, drills, etc
- Kids pitch starting in the first inning
- 4 balls is a walk – have coach pitch about 6 pitches so the batter can hit
 - Ball put in play can result in an out
 - If still not put in play, kid runs to first
- 3 strikes is an out
- Optionally start with last 2 outs from prior inning on 1st and 2nd base.
- Inning ends after 3 outs or 5 runs.
- Hard 1 hour and 30 minute time limit on Saturdays due to field scheduling.
- League will try to provide young in-training umpires. (Coaches are still in charge of the game)

Relay Race – Following the Game

One team line up at home, the other at second. On coaches signal the teams race around the bases. If teams are uneven some kids can run more than once or invite young siblings to join. Emphasize safety (don't bump each other, etc) and sportsmanship (cheer for your team, not against the other team).