

2019 Instructional Farm League Guidelines

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These guidelines are intended to promote fair gameplay throughout the league. When a situation is not covered by these rules, refer to the current year's Little League rulebook.

Little League Mission Statement: "to promote, develop, supervise, and voluntarily assist in all lawful ways, the interest of those who will participate in Little League Baseball."

Through proper guidance and exemplary leadership, the Little League program assists youth in developing the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork and physical well-being. By espousing the virtues of character, courage and loyalty, the Little League Baseball program is designed to develop superior citizens rather than superior athletes.

Rule #1: Player safety is the **TOP** priority!

Rule #2: This is an instructional league and we are here to **INSTRUCT** the players on how to play the game better and have **FUN** so they continue to play for many years to come.

Game Play

General

1. Games are to be either 6 innings or a maximum of 2 hours, whichever comes first.
2. Scores should not be kept or shared with the team at game's end. However, a lineup card should be kept during the game to allow the coach to track the batting order and player placement.
3. Only pitching machines are to be used in games; no coach or player pitch allowed. In the event the pitching machine breaks and cannot be repaired, check the fieldhouse for the spare. If the spare is not available, only then may coaches front toss pitch to their players and only until the pitching machine becomes available again. Notify the Farm League rep of any pitching machine breakdowns or issues during usage as soon as possible. First year farm players and/or batters of lesser ability being granted 6 strikes may be pitched to by the coach AFTER the 4th strike against the machine.
4. Each team will supply one game ball at the beginning of each game for use.
5. Common sense should prevail! Our duty as coaches is to instruct these kids in the game of baseball. As such, there will be times for learning opportunities that arise in a situation. Managers/coaches should use common sense in explaining a rule or situation provided the player can grasp it. (i.e. don't expect a first year farm player to understand the infield fly rule).

Defense

1. Up to two defensive coaches are allowed on the field during play. They are for assisting with defensive positioning and player instruction and should be positioned in the outfield. A third coach is allowed behind the catcher to assist with pass balls as requested by the opposing team.

2. There should be no more than 10 players on the field at once, and when a 10th player is utilized they should be placed in the outfield by splitting center field into two halves, left center and right center.
3. Player positioning should be rotated regularly in each game so they experience both infield and outfield play. Please limit players to no more than three innings at the same position in a game. With that said, safety is the top priority and a child should not be put in a position they are not yet ready to play and could be injured. It is your job as a coach understand each player's capabilities and to work with them during practice to get them to the point where they can play infield and outfield.
4. The "Pitcher" stands on either side of the pitching machine; left for left handed batters and right for right-handed batters and behind the rubber.

Offense

1. Up to four offensive team coaches are allowed on the field while batting; one on first base and one on third base. A third coach will man and operate the pitching machine and a fourth behind the catcher to assist with pass balls, the catcher and the batter. However, please be sure that your dugout is managed so that players are not unruly and behaving safely. The base coach closest to their dugout assumes this responsibility when all coaches are in the field or you may elect a parent to man the dugout.
2. Players not at bat or base running must remain in the dugout or behind the fence at all times. **NO PLAYERS** should stand in foul territory, including the on deck batter.
3. All players bat in a continuous batting order. The inning is over when the last player bats OR three outs are made, whichever comes first.
4. **NO BATS** shall be held or used by any player except the player at Home Plate currently hitting. Additionally, there is **NO SWINGING** allowed by the on-deck batter.
5. Each batter gets a minimum of 4 strikes (including foul balls) or a maximum of 8 pitches, whichever comes first. Batters are not to be called out on an uncaught foul ball, only a swinging strike or reaching the maximum pitch count. First year Farm players and/or batters of lesser ability may be granted 2 extra strikes for a total of 6 strikes or maximum of 10 pitches. Inform the batter as the count progresses so they understand how many pitches remain. Consider noting the strikes available to each player before the game on the lineup card and inform players and the opposing manager BEFORE the game. Coaches should keep the batter aware of how many strikes/pitches they have left during the at-bat. ****Rule Intent:** We want batters to be successful and to keep the game moving. We also want the majority of batters to only have 4 strikes. Don't use this as a way to garner more hits by providing every player 6 strikes. The maximum is in place for batters who just aren't swinging the bat.
6. Doubles and triples should be awarded only for true hits, not as a result of taking extra bases on errors or poor fielding. Examples of a batter being allowed a double/triple are when a ball is hit OVER the outfielder's heads or falls between two outfielders and rolls passed them. Another example is when the ball is hit hard in a gap, rolls passed the outfielders error free and goes at least 2/3 of the way to the fence. A batter is NOT allowed an extra base on a dropped fly ball or a fielding error by an infielder that goes to the outfield. ****Rule Intent:** To encourage various man on base situations so fielders learn how to handle them; provide more throw the runner out opportunities; to discourage runaway "scoring" and to reward batters for well struck balls.
7. On base runners are limited to as many bases as the batter earned with their hit.
8. Runners may advance 1 base on fielding errors made by the infield trying to throw them out (excluding throws to first), but may not advance on errors made fielding the batter's hit. Any runners that advance more than 1 base or advance on the hit's fielding error are sent back. The ball is dead after the first error and runners either reach base or are thrown out. As an example, a throw made to second for the runner goes passed the fielder, then runners are allowed to try and advance 1 base but can still be thrown out.

9. There is **NO BASE STEALING** at any time.
10. Two step leads are encouraged once the ball crosses home plate so that players can be taught the concept of leads and getting a jump running when the batter hits.

Game Schedule Changes & Field Prep

1. Managers coordinate together to change game schedules or venues.
2. Game cancellations due to rain are to be decided mutually by the two opposing managers.
3. If during a game, thunder is heard or lightning is seen, the game is called. In all other cases of inclement weather during a game, managers decide mutually if and when to call the game.
4. When it rains overnight the teams in the first games of the day are responsible for prepping the field. The managers should communicate and decide on the time to meet and work together and/or call for help if needed.
5. Inform the League Rep of all cancellations, calls or changes to the schedule or venue.

Concessions

1. For each game both teams will provide a person to help run the concession stand. We suggest that at the beginning of the season you assign each game to your roster's families in alphabetical order. You should also update the NOTES field in the BLL Website with the person(s) responsible for concessions. If someone doesn't show, it is the team manager's responsibility to find a substitute.
2. After the game, the home team is responsible for ensuring the concession stand and bathrooms are clean and that money has been counted accurately, signed for and deposited in the lock box. Additionally, they should ensure that field equipment is put away, that the facility doors are locked and the alarm armed.

First Aid & Injuries

1. At least one coach from each team must be CPR and Medical certified.
2. A First Aid Kit is located in the concession stand at Dennehy Field.
3. **ALL** injuries must be reported to the BLL Safety Officer (Lisa DeGross, 860-329-3460, dltrj25@gmail.com). ***Head injuries must be reported immediately!*** An incident report should be filled out and submitted.