



Yorkville Youth Athletic Association

Little League Baseball Rules

***New rules as of Fall 2011 are in RED**

General & Administrative

1. **The Field:** The games will be played on a 60-by-60-foot diamond. The distance from the back point of home plate to the far side of first base and third base will be 60-feet. The distance from the outside corner of first base to the far corner of second base will be 60-feet. The distance from the back point of home plate to the front edge of the pitcher's rubber will be approximately 46 feet. The distance from the back point of home to the back point of second base is 84 feet and 7 inches.
2. **The Umpires:** The league will provide (1) one umpire for each game. In the event that no umpire is available, each team will provide one umpire. Each umpire will officiate during his team's offensive half-inning.
3. **The Teams:**
 - a. **Minimum players to start the game:** At the start time for the game, each team must have at least (8) eight players from its official roster at the field for the game to be considered official.
 - b. **Bat the roster:** During the game, the teams will bat their roster of all the players present at the game, regardless of the number of players each team has. No pinch-hitting is permitted. The batting order may not be altered.
 - c. **Substitutions:** Teams may substitute in the field freely, including pitchers. All players must play a minimum of three innings in the field per game if the game lasts six innings.
4. **The Game:**
 - a. **Number of Innings:** There will be a maximum of (6) six innings per game. **If a game is called due to inclement weather, or for any other reasons, a game must go 4 innings to be official, or 3.5 given the home team is leading.**
 - b. **Time Limits:** The time limit for each game will be (120) one hundred and twenty minutes - (2) two hours. The last inning cannot begin if there is less than (15) fifteen minutes remaining in the (2) two- hour time limit according to the umpire's watch.
 - c. **A Half-Inning:** The offensive half-inning will consist of 3 outs; or a number of at-bats equal to the number of batters in the line-up of the team with the fewest number of players in the lineup, whichever comes first.
 - i. **Scenario 1:** Team "A" has (10) ten players and team "B" has (13) players, the "maximum number of at-bats" during an offensive half-inning in that game will be (10) ten.
 - ii. **Scenario 2:** Team "A" has (8) eight players and team "B" has (11) players, the "maximum number of at-bats" during an offensive half-inning in that game will be (8) eight.

- d. **Dropped third strike rule:** There is no dropped third strike rule. On a dropped third strike, the batter is out, and he may not advance to first base.
- e. **Final Batter:** When the final batter in the inning comes to bat, the umpire will call “two out, last batter”. At that time play will resume and shall be played as any other out, or until the umpire calls time out at the end of the play.

5. Coaching:

- a. All coaches of the defensive team (the team in the field) must be inside the fenced in dugout unless they have called time and the umpire has acknowledged it.
- b. A coach is only permitted to visit the pitchers mound once in an inning before removing the pitcher from the game. On the second visit the pitcher must be removed from the game.
- c. Offensive first and third base coaches may not physically assist a runner or prevent his advancement during playing action, either by pushing him toward or away from a base. At the end of the action, the ball is dead, the assisted runner is out, any additional outs made on the play stand, and all runners not put out return to bases occupied at the time of the infraction (NFHS High School Baseball Rules, 3-2-2, 2010).
- d. Offensive first and third base coaches must vacate the area if a fielder is attempting to make a play. When the base coach interferes the ball is dead immediately and the batter is out. All runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch (NFHS High School Baseball Rules, 3-2-3, 2010).
- e. **Game Responsibility:** Coaches are responsible for fielding a team to all Yorkville Youth Athletic Association scheduled games, regardless of the number of players who will attend. Coaches do not have the authority to cancel any game for any reason. Any disputes with fellow coaches, umpires, directors, rules or Yorkville administration, shall be discussed with parties involved and Yorkville Youth Athletic Association Executive Director at the proper appointed time. The only time a coach may remove a team from the field is in the event of imminent danger.

6. Equipment

- a. **Uniform:** Players should wear jerseys provided by Yorkville, including the hat, t-shirt, pants, and socks. All coaches should wear the Yorkville t-shirts provided to them.
- b. **Bats:** Bats should be no more than 2 1/4 inches in diameter, and no longer than 30 inches. BIG BARREL BATS ARE PROHIBITED.
- c. **Cleats:** Players may wear plastic cleats. Metal cleats are prohibited.

Batting

1. **Number of batters:** As many as 14 batters may come to bat in any offensive half-inning.
2. **Bunting:** A batter is allowed to bunt the ball.
3. **Dropped third strike rule:** on a dropped third strike, the batter is out. He may not advance to first base.
4. **Bases-on-balls:** Regular baseball rules apply – 4 balls is a walk, 3 strikes is an out.

5. **Batting helmet:** All batters will wear a batting helmet during their at-bat.
6. **Time out:** A batter who steps out of the batter's box without calling for and receiving a time out from the home plate umpire, will receive a called strike.
7. **Avoiding a pitch:** A batter who steps out of the batter's box to avoid being hit by a pitch will not be penalized.
8. **Hit by a pitch:** When a pitch hits a batter, he will be awarded first base. **If a batter swings the bat, but is hit by the ball it is a strike. The ball becomes dead immediately when the ball hits the batter.**
9. **Dropping the bat:** after hitting the ball, the batter will drop his bat in a safe and controlled manner in or near the batter's box or near the first base line. Failure by the batter to drop the bat in a safe and controlled manner will result in the batter being called "out."

Base Running

1. **Stealing or leading:** A team may "steal" only one base per offensive half inning. A team has used their one "steal" for the inning if a player safely steals the next base, if the player is tagged out at the next base or tagged out in a run down. The team HAS NOT used their steal if a player runs towards the next base, but returns to the original base safely – even in a run down situation. It is permitted to attempt a steal from first base to second, or from second base to third. Attempting to steal from third base to home is prohibited. A player attempting to steal is not allowed to advance to the next base if the ball is thrown into the outfield or gets away from a fielder. If a player mistakenly advances on an overthrow it will be a dead ball, and the player will return to second or third base. The player cannot be tagged out. Any other attempted steals will result in the runner being called out. Stealing and leading are prohibited when:
 - a. the pitcher has the ball in his possession, and
 - b. the pitcher's foot is in contact with the rubber, and
 - c. the catcher is in the catcher's box.
2. **Leaving the base:** The base runner may attempt to "steal" the next base after the pitched ball passes home plate completely or if the pitch hits the ground in front of home plate.
3. **Penalty for leaving the base early:** If a batter leaves his base before the ball is hit, or before the ball passes home plate, or before the ball hits the dirt, he will be called out by the umpire. Any ball in play is dead.
4. **Sliding:** Sliding is permitted. A player may refuse to slide, but must not come in contact with a fielder – he must give himself up by walking to the base. Base runners may not slide into a base headfirst.
5. **Avoiding contact:** A base runner will make a reasonable effort to avoid contact with a defensive player covering a base. A base runner will not attempt to "collide" or "knock down" or "run into" any defensive player covering a base for any reason. A base runner that intentionally collides with a defensive player will be called out. **If the defender is blocking the plate with the ball in their possession the runner should give him or herself up by walking to the base. If a base runner does not slide or give themselves up, and runs into a defender in possession of the ball, the runner will be called out, and EJECTED.**

- 6. Out of the baseline:** If a runner is out of the baseline, meaning he is more than three feet away from a direct line between bases, he will be called out (NFHS Baseball Rules, 8-4-2(a), 2010). A runner is also out if he dives over a fielder (NFHS, 8-4-2d).
- 7. Base runner's Interference:** A runner is out if he runs into, or obstructs, a fielder who is in the immediate act of making a play, even if the fielder is in the baseline (NFHS, 8-4-2c). Any runner is out when he deliberately knocks the ball from a fielder's hand (8-4-2r).
- 8. Batting helmet:** Base runners will wear a batting helmet while on base.

Pitching

- 1. Maximum innings per game:** A pitcher may not pitch more than (3) three innings per game.
- 2. Maximum innings per double-header:** A pitcher may not pitch more than (6) six innings in a double header.
- 3. Complete inning pitched:** If a pitcher delivers one pitch in an inning, he shall be charged with (1) one complete inning pitched.
- 4. Maximum innings per seven-day period:** A pitcher may not pitch more than (6) six innings in a seven-day span. Innings pitched include Yorkville Travel, and all non-Yorkville leagues. It is the coach's responsibility to be aware of any innings pitched outside Yorkville Little League.
- 5. Foot on the pitching rubber:** During the act of pitching pitchers must have one foot in contact with the rubber.
- 6. Pick-offs:** A pitcher may not attempt a pick-off at any base.
- 7. Balk:** A pitcher may not be charged with a balk.
- 8. Spitball:** A pitcher may not touch their throwing hand to their mouth and then the ball without first wiping off their hand, or fingers, on a their shirt or pants. If a player puts their hand to their mouth and then the ball a "Ball" will be added to the count.
- 9. Hit batsman:** A pitcher who hits (2) two batters in one offensive half-inning, or hits (3) batters in three innings will be removed as pitcher, and may not return to the game as a pitcher.
- 10. Bases-on-balls:** Regular rules apply, 4 balls equals a walk. Coaches will remove a pitcher if he is unable to place the ball over the plate and gives up many walks.
- 11. Intentional Walks:** Intentionally walking a batter is prohibited.
- 12. Complete inning:** If a pitcher throws one pitch in an inning, he will be charged with a complete inning pitched.
- 13. Pitcher removed:** If a pitcher is removed from a game for any reason, he may return to pitch if he has not been removed from the field. For example, he may play the outfield and then return as the pitcher later in the game.

Catching

- 1. Equipment:** Catchers will wear helmet, mask, throat protector (if available), chest protector, shin guards, catcher's mitt (if available), and protective cup.

2. **Talking to batters:** Catchers will not talk to batter or attempt to distract the batter in any way. If a catcher violates this rule the batter will be awarded a base-on-balls. This is a judgment call and may not be protested.

Fielding

1. **Maximum number of fielders:** There may be (10) ten fielders on the field during the defensive half of an inning.
2. **Maximum number of infielders:** There may be as many as (6) six infielders in the infield.
3. **Maximum number of outfielders:** There may be as many as (4) four outfielders, and there will be no use of the "short fielder" to cover an infield position.
4. **Infield fly rule:** The infield fly rule shall apply in all games. **An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, and provided the hit is made before two are out and at a time when first and second bases, or all bases, are occupied (NFHS High School Baseball Rules, 2-19, 2010).**
5. **Avoiding contact:** A fielder who does not have the ball may not deny a runner access to the base he is trying to reach. The runner has the right to reach a base without obstruction if a fielder does not have the ball. The fielder is not allowed to deny the runner access to the base. **If the fielder has the ball, he is allowed to block the base and deny the runner access.** Being in the act of catching the ball is *not possession*.
6. **Fielder's Interference:** An umpire will call obstruction when a fielder, without the ball, makes contact with a base runner within the baseline. An obstructed runner and all other runners affected are awarded the bases they would have reached, in the umpire's opinion, had there been no obstruction.

Sportsmanship

1. **Throwing equipment:** Deliberately throwing a bat, helmet, glove, or other piece of equipment is illegal. **Any player that does will be ejected.**
2. **Fighting:** A player who instigates a fight will be automatically ejected. A player who responds in a manner to defend himself will not be ejected. However, a player who responds to an instigated fight in a manner that escalates the fight shall be ejected as well.
3. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Behavior including, but not limited to, trash-talking, arguing with an umpire, purposely distracting the pitcher, and foul language, can result in suspension.
4. **Suspension:** If warranted, the league, or organizational directors, may suspend a player or a coach from any team. Coaches can bench their players, and can request that a player be suspended.

Coaching Expectations and Objectives

The primary objective at the Little League level, as is the case with all leagues, is to prepare players for advancement to the next level of play. As coaches at this level, your role is considered the most critical of all our leagues. As players move up to the Major League, it is necessary for them to have received sufficient training in prior years to ensure a successful outcome including their safety, competitiveness, and their continued desire to play baseball.

Once a player leaves the Little League, he should have a good understanding of the fundamentals of baseball and know "why" he/she is making certain plays. In order to maximize the abilities of our players, coaches at each level of play are being challenged to ensure that players on their teams receive instruction in various aspects of the game.

The coaches at the Little League level should ensure that throughout the season, and certainly by the end of the season, players on their team receive instruction on the following skills:

Batting

- A. Proper batting stance
- B. Correct bat position
- C. Effective swing execution**
- D. Effective bunting technique
- E. Knowledge about the difference between bunting for a base hit and a sacrifice bunt**

Base Running

- A. Effective base running technique
- B. Exploding off the base after the ball crosses the plate or after ball is hit
- C. Knowing when to tag up and when to go halfway on a fly ball
- D. Effective and safe sliding technique
- E. Knowledge and understanding of the "no stealing" rule and knowing when to run

Fielding

- A. Consistent use of two hands to field the ball
- B. Knowledge of how to play the infield positions
- C. Execution of correct foot work at a base when taking a throw from another fielder
- D. Effective execution of the double play**
- E. Effective execution of the run down play
- F. Effective execution of catching a fly ball that is beyond the outfielder
- G. Knowledge and execution of the correct use of the outfield relay
- H. Knowing who covers each base after the pitch
- I. Knowing who is the relay man in the infield based on where the ball is hit and where the play is to be made

Pitching

- A. An effective, comfortable, natural pitching motion
- B. How to hold the ball to throw a fastball. (Four seams and two seams)

Catching

- A. An effective, comfortable position behind the plate
- B. Effective technique for blocking wild pitches in the dirt (Drop down vs. reaching for the ball)