

HIGHLANDS LITTLE LEAGUE “DIVISION AA”
RULES AND GUIDELINES
VERSION DATE 2024



BEHAVIOUR AND UNIFORMS

1. Coaches must consistently role model sportsmanship, respect, and create a positive, fun, and safe environment for young athletes to learn and develop.
2. Coaches must maintain control over the players on the benches at all times. Players should be encouraged to sit on the bench in their proper batting order with their helmet on ready to take their turn at bat. A coach, manager or parent should be present on the bench to ensure the dugout is kept under control.
3. Players will wear; running shoes or cleats (no metal spikes), grey baseball pants with belts, team shirts (tucked in) and team hats. All players must wear a protective cup at all times.
4. Helmets must be worn at all times by batters and baserunners.
5. Back catchers shall wear full protective catchers' gear including facemask, throat mask, chest protector, shin and kneepads regardless of whether they are warming up or playing the game.
6. No player is permitted to wear any form of jewelry.
7. All players must remain inside the dugout except the person up to bat. There are no on-deck circles and no warming up outside the dugout.

FIELD SET-UP

8. Home team is responsible for the preparation of the field before the game and for putting the equipment in the lockbox at the end of the game. This includes raking the pitching mound and home plate area both before and after the game. If it is the first or only game of the day, the home team should also line the field.
9. The pitching rubber shall be 46 feet from home plate. Bases are 60 feet apart.
10. Field lining should include:
 - Batter's box
 - Foul lines extended past first and third bases to the outfield
 - A catcher's circle with 4' radius
 - Home run line comprised of flags or pylons (minimum 5) at 130' from home plate
11. It is important to arrive at least 30 minutes before game time to have the field properly set up.

UMPIRES

12. The league will provide two umpires for each game, one for home plate and one for the bases. The umpires should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
13. The umpire's decision is final, there is no arguing with the umpires about their calls; however, the head coach (and only the head coach) may respectfully communicate with the umpire to ask for clarification on a call.

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14. The plate umpire will be the official time piece for the game and will determine the start and end time.

GAME STRUCTURE

15. Home team will occupy the third base bench. Visiting team will occupy the first base bench.
16. Prior to the first inning the scorekeeper and umpire must be given a list of all players in their batting order. No changes to the list will be permitted during the game. If a player arrives late, their name must be added to the bottom of the list. Each player will bat in turn whether or not they are in the first fielding line-up.
17. Each team must have a minimum of 8 players to start a game. If not, the game will be a forfeit and the score will be determined as 6-0. Teams may lend their opponent a player to fill out their roster, though a forfeit will still be recorded.
18. In the event a team has 8 batters, the 9th place in the order will not constitute an automatic out.
19. The umpires will hold a meeting at home plate with the coaches before the start of the game to review the rules, strike zone, etc. The home team shall supply the umpire with 2 game balls at the beginning of the game.
20. Each team will provide a scorekeeper and they will work together to ensure their records match throughout the game.
21. A league game shall be at least four innings and not more than six innings.
22. The time limit for games shall be 1 hour and 45 minutes of play. No new inning may start after 1 hour and 45 minutes of play except the fourth inning. The umpire will work with the coaches to monitor the time of play and will advise when starting the final inning of play. For clarity on this rule, a new inning shall be deemed to begin once the 3rd out of the previous inning is registered.
23. Coaches are not allowed on the field of play during the game except during timeouts. When their team is up to bat they are encouraged to coach from first or third base and must remain in the designated coaching boxes. Coaches of the fielding team must remain near their dugout.
24. In the last inning it is assumed that the home team will not bat if they already have more runs than the visiting team. Depending on time etc. coaches can use their discretion if they want to get in the extra practice and play this half inning.
25. No more than three runs may be scored by either team in one inning. After three runs are scored in one inning the team in the field goes to bat, regardless of the number of outs. This rule does not apply to the playoff semi-finals and finals where the last inning shall be “open” with unlimited runs.
26. At the completion of the game each team will cheer for the other and proceed to shake hands with the opposing players, coaches, and umpires.
27. Coaches need to have their team clear the field and the dugout promptly at the end of the game to allow the players from the next game to prepare for their game.

TEAM ROTATION

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28. Each player should have a minimum of one inning playing an infield position and will ideally be rotated into each of the prime positions (first base, pitcher, shortstop, catcher) at least once during the season.
29. No player can sit off two innings in a row or sit out twice during the same game before all other players have sat out at least once.
30. A player can pitch or catch no more than two innings per game before May 15 and no more than three innings per game after May 15.

PITCHING

31. During the first half of the season up until May 15 the first two innings of the game will be played using the pitching machine. Players will pitch starting in the 3rd inning. After May 15, players will pitch the entire game and the pitching machine will be retired.
32. Any player may pitch. There is no limit to the number of pitchers that may be used in a game. During the first half of the season up until May 15, coaches are encouraged to give at least one inning to all players who would like to try pitching.
33. A pitcher who hits three batters in one inning or four batters in a game shall be removed as pitcher.
34. A pitcher who walks four batters consecutively shall be removed as pitcher.
35. A pitcher once removed from the mound may not return as a pitcher in that game.
36. Pitcher substitutions must come from the field of play unless the player coming off the bench has already sat out for one complete inning.
37. Coaches can approach the mound to talk to the pitcher three times per pitcher. On the third trip to the mound the pitcher must be pulled. Catchers may participate in these meetings on the mound.
38. There are no balks or intentional walks. A balk will be deemed as no pitch and the runners may not advance.
39. During the first half of the season up until May 15, pitchers may pitch up to two bat lengths in front of the rubber at their coach's discretion. After May 15, pitchers must pitch from the rubber.
40. The pitch count for each pitcher should be recorded by the scorekeeper.
41. Pitchers and catchers must follow the Little League rules with respect to rest periods as follows:

- 1 – 20 pitches in a day.....no calendar day of rest required
- 21 – 35 pitches in a day....1 calendar day of rest required
- 36 – 50 pitches in a day.....2 calendar days of rest required
- 51 – 65 pitches in a day.....3 calendar days of rest required
- 66 or more pitches in a day.....4 calendar days of rest required

No more than 50 pitches per day for players aged 6-8.

No more than 75 pitches per day for players aged 9-10.

No more than 85 pitches per day for players aged 11-12.

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A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches during a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day. A player who catches in four or more innings cannot pitch for the remainder of that day.

Exception: If a pitcher (or catcher) reaches the limit while facing a batter, the pitcher (or catcher) may continue to pitch (or catch) until that batter reaches a base or is put out.

BATTING

42. During the first half of the season up until May 15, coaches will use the pitching machine to pitch to their own team's batters for the first two innings. No walks allowed, players must hit or be struck out. There will be a maximum of five pitches per batter (unless 5th pitch is fouled off). If the batter does not swing at the fifth pitch, they will be called out. The pitching machine will pitch strikes, kids should be encouraged to swing.
43. After May 15, the umpire will be calling balls and strikes for every pitch. After four balls a batter is walked and is awarded first base. Kids should be encouraged to swing. The umpires are encouraged to have a generous strike zone (+2" on all sides) as well.
44. If a player throws his bat when running to first base they will be given a warning by the umpire. If it happens again in the same game the batter will be called out.
45. If a player throws their bat in a display of temper, it is left to the coach's discretion but is strongly encouraged they be removed from the game.
46. If the pitching coach or pitching machine is hit by the batted ball or during the fielding of the ball, the play is dead, a single is awarded, and all runners advance one base only.
47. Batters cannot advance to 1st on a dropped third strike.
48. Bunting is not permitted.

BASE RUNNING AND FIELDING

49. There is no infield fly rule in effect.
50. Runners are allowed to tag up and advance on a caught fly ball at their own risk (i.e. Sacrifice fly)
51. A baserunner is permitted to attempt to steal 2nd and 3rd base if the ball leaves the catcher's circle, but only one base may be stolen per play and no stealing home.
52. There is no lead off until the ball crosses the plate and stealing is not permitted unless the ball has left the catcher's circle. If the umpire determines that the baserunner left the base early when stealing, they will return the runner back to the original base.
53. Baserunners should slide at 2nd base, 3rd base and home whenever there is a play being made at that base. A runner who does not slide at home plate when a fielder is throwing to the catcher may be called out by the umpire. No runner may slide headfirst except to return to the base previously occupied.
54. In an instance where a baserunner is stealing 2nd or 3rd base, if there is an overthrow by the catcher the baserunner must remain at the base. This encourages the catcher to throw every time without fear of costing their team a run on an error.
55. If a rolling or bouncing ball crosses the home-run line, by error or otherwise, the batter

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- is entitled to a two-base hit. A home-run ball must clear the home-run line in the air.
56. A runner who interferes with the defensive player attempting to field a hit ball is out and the ball is dead. Any other runners should return to the bases occupied at the time of the interference.
 57. The ball is live on overthrows that occur when a ball is batted into play. If a ball is overthrown and goes out of play the baserunner(s) will be awarded one additional base. (e.g. Overthrow to 1st base that goes out of play, the baserunner will advance to 2nd base).
 58. Baserunners may not advance on overthrows when the catcher is throwing back to the pitcher after a pitch that is not hit.
 59. Fielders must stay off the base paths unless making a baseball play. Fielders are not allowed to impede the baserunners or block the base paths or the bases at any time. Infielders should position themselves in front or behind the base paths so as to avoid contact with runners.
 60. Fielders shall allow runners access to their respective bases unless they have possession of the ball.
 61. The ball is still live when a ball is hit and fielded by an outfielder. The outfielder must throw the ball back into (or through) the infield for the play to be dead. It is assumed that the runner will stop once they reach the base that they were headed to before the throw enters the infield. Even if the ball is poorly thrown and ends up in the outfield, runners cannot continue to progress. Base coaches should NOT get aggressive about sending stationary runners in this situation. The goal is for the fielders to learn to field the ball and throw it in quickly.

POSTPONED GAMES

62. Opposing coaches will decide if a game cannot be played due to weather; however, unless the game is called off early teams must be at the field ready to play. Three completed innings will constitute a game called due to the weather.
63. Rained out games should be rescheduled if possible and will be played over from the beginning if they were cancelled before three innings were completed.
64. Teams must arrange makeup games with their Age Group Coordinator based on field availability.