

HIGHLANDS LITTLE LEAGUE “DIVISION A”

RULES AND GUIDELINES

VERSION DATE 2026-01



BEHAVIOUR, COACHING AND UNIFORMS

1. Coaches must consistently role model sportsmanship and respect and create a positive, fun, and safe environment for young athletes to learn and develop.
2. Coaches must not smoke, chew tobacco, vape or consume alcoholic beverages while on the field or in the dugouts during practice, warm up or games.
3. Coaches must maintain control over the players at all times. Players should be encouraged to sit on the bench in their proper batting order. A coach should be present by the dugout at all times to ensure it is kept under control.
4. During games, a team shall not have more than four coaches on the field consisting of a head coach and up to three assistant coaches (the “Team Coaches”). Team Coaches are permitted to have additional parents help out with practices.
5. Team Coaches shall not be permitted to participate in any practice or game until they have delivered their Police Information Check to Highlands Little League.
6. 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.
7. Helmets must be worn at all times by batters and baserunners.
8. Back catchers shall wear full protective catchers' gear, including facemask, throat mask, chest protector, shin and knee pads, regardless of whether they are warming up or playing the game.
9. All game bats must conform to Little League regulations (marked with USA Baseball).
10. 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

11. 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 – and as required covering the mound and batter's box with a tarp at the end of the day. The exiting home team is responsible for ensuring there is sufficient chalk for the next home team to line the field (even if the next game is the following day).
12. The pitching rubber shall be 46 feet from home plate. Bases are 60 feet apart.
13. Field lining should include:
 - Batter's box
 - Foul lines extended past first and third bases to the outfield
 - Baselines from 1st to 2nd and 2nd to 3rd (time permitting)
 - Home run line chalked or comprised of low profile pylons (minimum 5) at 120' from home plate (do not use cone pylons as they may be a hazard)
14. It is important to arrive at least 30 minutes before game time to have the field properly set-up including pitching machine. The pitching machine will require some amount of adjustment, especially if first game of the day. Pitching machine should be set to speed 4 (or appropriate speed where ball has a generous arc and is “very hittable”).

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15. No equipment on field. Bags, etc. should be in dugout or behind fence. Exception for a bucket of balls for coaches to sit on.

UMPIRES

16. "A Ball" games rarely, if ever, will have an umpire until playoffs. Respective coaches shall manage calls on the field, acting fairly and in good faith. Common sense should prevail (e.g. the third base coach shouldn't be the one to make a call at first base and the coach on the pitching machine logically should be calling strikes and keeping a pitch count).
17. Alternatively, the home team may assign a parent or coach to play the role of umpire and all calls during the game will be deferred to that person with assistance from the coaches where needed. Remember, the kids are there to have fun first and foremost!

GAME STRUCTURE

18. Home team will occupy the third base bench. Visiting team will occupy the first base bench.
19. Each team will provide a scorekeeper who will have been trained to use GameChanger scorekeeping software. The home and away scorekeepers will work together to ensure their records match throughout the game.
20. Prior to the first inning the scorekeeper and umpire if present 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.
21. Home team will supply the appropriate type of game ball for the division.
22. Each team must have a minimum of six 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 one or more players to fill out their roster, though a forfeit will still be recorded.
23. If both teams have 10 or more players, four outfielders should be used on defense to maximize the number of players in the field.
24. Unless a team is playing with fewer than nine players, coaches should not have a bucket of balls beside the pitching machine during the game. Coaches are encouraged to play a catcher every inning and that player should retrieve the ball and throw it back to the mound.
25. A league game shall be at least four innings and not more than six innings, except in the case of a game called due to weather, in which case three completed innings shall be considered a completed game.
26. The time limit for games shall be 90 minutes of play. If another game is scheduled to begin immediately after yours, no new inning may start after 75 minutes of play—unless it is the start of the fourth inning, which shall be completed.
27. Except for the coach operating the pitching machine, coaches are not allowed on the field of play during the game. When their team is up to bat they are encouraged to coach from first or third base and must remain in the first 1/3 section of base path closest to the base. Coaches of the fielding team must remain near their dugout.

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28. In the last inning it is assumed that the home team will not bat if they already have more runs than the visiting team. The score is now final. Depending on time, etc., coaches can use their discretion if they want to get in the extra practice and play this half inning.
29. During the first four innings, no more than four runs may be scored by either team. In the 5th and 6th innings a maximum of six runs may be scored. After the maximum 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.
30. On the completion of the game, each team will cheer the other, line up along their respective baselines and proceed to shake hands with the opposing players at home plate. A relay race around the bases can occur.
31. 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

32. Coaches will fairly rotate players through all positions; they may choose to do this by inning or by game. In playoffs, some position specialization may occur, but players should not play one position more than two innings consecutively.
33. Notwithstanding the above, each player must play a minimum of one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield each game.
34. 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.

BATTING

35. The batting order shall be set alphabetically by players’ last names and used as a continuous order from game to game. The player listed as “on deck” at the conclusion of one game shall be the lead-off batter in the following game. This requirement remains in effect through May 10, after which coaches may select their own batting order or continue using a continuous batting order at their discretion. The objective of this rule is to ensure equal opportunities for all players to receive at-bats during the first six weeks of the season.
36. Coaches will use the pitching machine to pitch to their own team’s batters. No walks allowed, players must hit or be struck out.
37. There will be a maximum of five pitches per batter (unless 5th pitch is fouled off).
38. Through May 10, the batter will be allowed to swing up to five times before they are called out.
39. After May 10, the batter will be out on the first to occur, three strikes (via missed swings or foul balls (excluding 5th pitch foul ball) or five pitches. This means, 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.

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40. Umpires will determine if a partial swing is a strike. If there isn't an umpire, the coach operating the pitching machine will be responsible for making the call. Coaches are encouraged to be reasonable and make every effort to allow the kids to make contact and run the bases.
41. If a player throws his bat when running to first base, they will be given a warning. If it happens again in the same game, the batter will be called out. Coaches must educate their players on what to do with the bat after they hit the ball.
42. 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.
43. 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.

BASE RUNNING AND FIELDING

44. There is no infield fly rule in effect.
45. There is no stealing and no lead-off.
46. If a rolling or bouncing ball crosses the home-run line, by error or otherwise, the batter is entitled to a two-base hit. A home-run ball must clear the home-run line in the air.
47. Fielders must stay off base paths unless making a baseball play. Fielders are not allowed to impede the runners or block the base paths or the bases at any time. Infielders should position themselves in front of or behind the base paths so as to avoid contact with runners.
48. There are no overthrows in this division. All players are encouraged to throw to bases, even if there is no chance of getting runner in time. No players will advance on any overthrow.
49. On an infield hit (as defined by a ball that does not go past any of the bases or base lines) runners may only advance one base and the play is dead once a throw to a base is attempted or the infielder has control of the ball.
50. On an outfield hit, the ball remains live when fielded by an outfielder. However, once the outfielder makes a clear throwing motion and releases the ball with the intent to return it to the infield (including throws to a cutoff), all runners must stop at the base they were actively advancing toward at the time of release. Even if the throw is errant or mishandled, runners are not permitted to continue advancing.
51. Base coaches should not be over-aggressive in advancing runners; The goal of these rules is player development: on infield hits, to allow infielders to field the ball, make decisions, and return it to the pitcher; and on outfield hits, to allow outfielders to field the ball cleanly and return it to the infield quickly, without exploiting defensive miscues.

POSTPONED GAMES

52. 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. A good rule of thumb is to cancel if water begins to pool in the infield.

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53. 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.
54. Teams must arrange makeup games with their Age Group Coordinator based on field availability.

PLAYOFFS

55. Eligibility: Players must participate in at least 50% of scheduled team games and practices during the regular season to be eligible for playoff participation. In cases involving injury or other extenuating circumstances, an exemption may be requested by the coach and will be reviewed and determined by the Player Agent.
56. Attendance for games and practices must be recorded in TeamSnap. Where playoff eligibility is in question, the Team Manager may be asked to verify attendance records to support eligibility decisions.