

HIGHLANDS LITTLE LEAGUE "DIVISION AA"

RULES AND GUIDELINES

VERSION DATE 2026-01



BEHAVIOUR, COACHING 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 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 kneepads 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, except for one pitcher and one catcher who may be warming up in the bullpen (as required, a safety spotter may also be present to protect from foul balls). 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
 - A catcher's circle with 8' radius
 - Home run line chalked or comprised of low-profile pylons (minimum 5) at 130' 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

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set up including pitching machine (up until May 10th). The pitching machine will require some amount of adjustment, especially if first game of the day. Pitching machine should be set to speed 5 (or appropriate speed where ball has only a small arc and is “reasonably hittable”).

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. 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.
17. 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.
18. The plate umpire will be the official time piece for the game and will determine the start and end time.

GAME STRUCTURE

19. Home team will occupy the third base bench. Visiting team will occupy the first base bench.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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.
23. In the event a team has 8 batters, the 9th place in the order will not constitute an automatic out.
24. 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.
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 2 hours of play. No new inning may start after 1 hour and 45 minutes of play except the fourth inning, which shall be completed. 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 or run limit of the previous inning is registered.

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27. 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 first 1/3 section of base path closest to the base. Coaches of the fielding team must remain near their dugout.
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. 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. 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.
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. 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.
33. Each player must play at least one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield within the first four innings of a game. Over the course of the season, all players should ideally have the opportunity to play each of the key positions (pitcher, catcher, shortstop, and first base) at least once.

Playoff Exception: During playoff games, a starting pitcher who pitches three or more innings may be exempt from the requirement to play in the outfield within the first four innings; however, rule 32 still applies.
34. A player may not pitch or catch more than two innings per game through May 10, excluding a partial inning pitched in relief. After May 10, standard Little League pitch counts will apply.

PITCHING

35. Through May 10 the first two innings of the game will be played using the pitching machine. Players will pitch starting in the 3rd inning. After May 10, players will pitch the entire game and the pitching machine will be retired.
36. Any player may pitch. There is no limit to the number of pitchers that may be used in a game. Through May 10, coaches are encouraged to give at least one inning to all players who would like to try pitching.
37. A pitcher who hits three batters in one inning or four batters in a game shall be removed as pitcher.
38. A pitcher who walks four batters consecutively in one inning (excluding a batter being hit by a pitch) shall be removed as pitcher.
39. A pitcher once removed from the mound may not return as a pitcher in that game.
40. Pitcher substitutions must come from the field of play unless the player coming off

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the bench has already sat out for one complete inning.

41. 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.
42. There are no balks or intentional walks. A balk will be deemed as no pitch and the runners may not advance.
43. Through May 10, pitchers may pitch up to two bat lengths in front of the rubber at their coach's discretion. After May 10 and up until the end of the regular season, pitchers may pitch up to one bat length in front of the rubber, again at the coach's discretion. In the playoffs, all pitchers must pitch from the rubber.
44. The pitch count for each pitcher should be recorded by the scorekeeper.
45. 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.

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

46. Through May 10, 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.
47. After May 10, 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.
48. 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.



- 49. 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.
- 50. 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.
- 51. Batters cannot advance to 1st on a dropped third strike.
- 52. Bunting is not permitted.

BASE RUNNING AND FIELDING

- 53. There is no infield fly rule in effect.
- 54. Runners are allowed to tag up and advance on a caught fly ball at their own risk (i.e. Sacrifice fly)
- 55. 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.
- 56. 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.
- 57. 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.
- 58. 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.
- 59. 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.
- 60. 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. Other than to field the ball, defensive players must not obstruct a runner on the base path or risk being called for obstruction.
- 61. 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).
- 62. Baserunners may not advance on overthrows when the catcher is throwing back to the pitcher after a pitch that is not hit.
- 63. 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.
- 64. Fielders shall allow runners access to their respective bases unless they have possession of the ball.
- 65. On an infield hit, through May 10, runners may advance only until a play is made. The

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play is dead once an infielder has control of the ball and makes a throw to any base or attempts to return the ball to the pitcher, and runners may advance only to the next base they were actively advancing toward at the time the play is made. After May 10, the ball remains live and runners may continue to advance until an attempt is made to return the ball to the pitcher. Once a throw or clear attempt is made to return the ball to the pitcher, the play is dead and runners may advance only to the next base they were actively advancing toward at the time of the attempt.

66. On an outfield hit, through May 10, 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. After May 10, the ball remains live until an infielder has possession of the ball following a return throw to the infield, after which point the runners may advance only to the base they were actively advancing toward at the time possession is gained.
67. 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

68. 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.
69. 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.
70. Teams must arrange makeup games with their Age Group Coordinator based on field availability.

PLAYOFFS

71. 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.
72. 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.