

Universal Sports League LaVergne Baseball Softball Association – USL LBSA BASEBALL RULES

All Divisions: Coach Pitch, Kid Pitch and T-Ball

1. Game Time: Games will start at 5:45 p.m. on weekdays. Games will begin at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday and continue until all scheduled games are completed that day. The league will schedule make up games as field availability allows.

2. Scorecards:

Each Manager must sign the umpire's scorecard after each game. The completed card becomes the official record of the game score. Game cards must be signed when a game is interrupted as well even if the game is going to be replayed. Before signing the card, each manager shall be given time to review the card and ensure that the team names and TOTAL score (as listed in the total score box) is accurate.

3. Umpires shall designate the official start time and advise the scorekeeper of the time. The first game of each day will start at the scheduled time (i.e. 5:45 p.m. on weekdays and 8:00 a.m. on Saturdays). That game will NOT be started early unless both coaches agree. Subsequent games will start at their scheduled time OR earlier if the field is available. The subsequent game(s) on weekdays MAY start no more than 15 minutes earlier than scheduled time. Games on weekends MAY start no more than 30 minutes earlier than scheduled time. It is the responsibility of the coaches to have teams at the fields and ready for play based upon the earliest a game could start.

a. There will be no umpires, score or time keeper in the 3/4 T-Ball Division.

4. Grace Period:

There will be a ten (10) minute grace period for late players for the FIRST GAME ON WEEKDAYS ONLY.

(NOTE: If the grace period is needed, neither the game clock nor the game itself will start. The Manager needing the grace period shall inform the umpires immediately of the need.)

5. Time Limit:

a. All games in Coach Pitch Divisions will have an official time limit of one hour and fifteen minutes (1:15). Games are played until the time has expired or the maximum innings has been reached, whichever occurs first. All coach-pitch divisions will play six (6) innings. No normal inning shall start after the time limit is reached. The next inning starts at the time the third out is called in the prior inning.

b. All Kid Pitch Division (9-10 and 11-12) games will have an official time limit of one hour and thirty minutes (1:30). Games are played until the time has expired or the maximum innings has been reached, whichever occurs first. All kid-pitch divisions will play six (6) innings. No normal inning shall start after the time limit is reached. The next inning starts at the time the third out is called in the prior inning.

6. All games in T-Ball Division (3/4 age group) will play 60 minutes. Innings in progress at the time limit will be completed.

7. Interrupted Games –

During the regular season, games that have not become official games shall be replayed in their entirety. Any tournament games that have not become official games shall be suspended and resumed from the point of interruption. A game shall be deemed official if either more than half of the innings have been played or forty-five minutes of the game time has elapsed. For all coach-pitch divisions more than half will be after four innings (or 3 ½ if the home team is ahead).

8. Suspended Game Resumption –

when a suspended game is resumed each team shall keep their lineup the same. In the event a player that was in the original lineup cannot attend the resumed game that player may be replaced with a recruited player without penalty or may be skipped without an out being called (if the team still has nine players). If the situation exists that a regular member of the team was not on the lineup for the original game but is available for the resumed date that player (s) shall be used first to replace missing players.

9. Recruited players:

A. Coach Pitch: The 7/8 division shall recruit from the next lowest age division (5/6) or from their own division for pick-up players if no 5/6 players are available. (The 3/4 and 5/6 Divisions shall only recruit from their own division.)

a. Recruited players are to be used to bring a team up to nine players in Coach Pitch Divisions and the established minimum for T-Ball Divisions. A team may pick-up a maximum of four (4) players for a game.

b. Coach Pitch Divisions: Recruited players shall be placed at the bottom of the lineup for batting. The first recruited player shall play defense in right field, the second in left field, the third in center field, and the fourth at second base.

Each team bats the entire line up (All Players).

B. T-Ball Division: Recruited players shall be placed at the bottom of the lineup for batting. Recruited players can play in any position EXCEPT pitcher or first baseman.

a. If a coach has acquired a pick-up player and one of his own players arrives at the game, the pick-up player will NOT be removed from the lineup. The late arriving player and the pick-up player will be treated as a single player on the lineup and will alternate innings on defense and times at bat (note: the joined player from the team is required to play the same defensive position as the pickup player in this situation).

NOTE: If the pickup player has played two innings on defense OR had two at-bats, then any team player arriving after that will not be allowed to enter the game.

Each team bats the entire line up (All Players).

C. The 9/10 & 11-12 Division shall pickup players from their own division.

The 11/12 Division shall recruit from the next lowest age division (9/10) or from their own division for pick-up players if no 9/10 players are available.

a. Recruited players are to be used to bring a team up to nine players. A team may pick-up a maximum of four (4) players for a game

- b. Recruited players shall be placed at the bottom of the lineup for batting. The first recruited player shall play defense in right field, the second in left field, the third in center field and the fourth at second base.
- c. If a coach has acquired a pick-up player and one of his own players arrives at the game, the pick-up player will NOT be removed from the lineup. The late arriving player and the pick-up player will be treated as a single player on the lineup and will alternate innings on defense and times at bat (note: the joined player from the team is required to play the same defensive position as the pickup player in this situation).

NOTE: If the pickup player has played two innings on defense OR had two at-bats, then any team player arriving after that will not be allowed to enter the game.

Each team bats the entire line up (All Players).

10. Ejection / Player & Coach Suspensions:

Any time a player, coach or spectator is ejected from a game that person must immediately leave the park. If a player or coach, that person will not be allowed to have any further involvement in the game either via signals from outside the park or other electronic forms of communication. Any time an ejected person refuses to vacate the park in a timely manner the umpire has the discretion to end the game in a forfeit against the team of the ejected person. Additionally the person ejected is NOT allowed back in the park or on the field at the conclusion of the game in which the ejection occurred.

a. As a recreational league, we expect all adults adhere to the Code of Ethics that they acknowledge to allow player participation in the league and/or serve as a volunteer in any capacity with USL including Coach. We also expect players to understand the expectations of their behavior as well.

b. If an umpire removes a coach from a game, that coach shall not be allowed to participate in his/her next two played games for the team in which he was ejected. Offending coach does have the right to appeal before the members directed by USL Board President to hear the appeal for reinstatement. Coach must notify the proper chain of command of the desire to appeal the ejection within 24 hours of the ejection. A second ejection of a coach shall result in the coach banned from coaching for the remainder of the season. Offending coach does have the right to appeal before the USL Board for reinstatement. If a coach coaches more than one team in the USL that coach shall not be allowed to participate in his/her next played game for any team until after the next played games of the team in which he/she was ejected from has been concluded.

c. If a player is ejected from a game that player will not be allowed to participate in his/her next played game. If the same player is ejected a second time during the same season, the player shall sit out his/her next played game or games until the player appears before the next meeting of the USL Board to show cause why the player should be permitted to finish the season. Final decision will be at the discretion of the USL Board.

d. If a spectator is ejected from a game that spectator must leave the park immediately. Not leaving immediately could result in the team's forfeiture of the game, additional suspensions and the Police Department being notified. If a spectator is ejected twice in a season, the spectator will be banned from attending games governed by USL.

e. If an action is deemed excessively malicious then the USL President can impose player or coach suspensions in addition to the ejection penalties listed above.

f. If an ejection occurs after the game has concluded then the penalty shall include the next two played games. (Reason is that an ejection during the game involves loss of time in two games where an ejection after a game is over will not.)

g. If a player is removed from a game for using profanity OR is caught using profanity anywhere within the jurisdiction of USL LBSA (practice fields, playing fields, or anywhere else in the baseball parks) that player shall be subject to an additional suspension of one game. This same rule applies to the use of tobacco products by any player (regardless of age) while participating in league events. (Note: This penalty can be applied by umpires as well as any league board member that witnesses the incident.)

h. In the event a team's scheduled game results in playing a scrimmage due to forfeit, that game shall count as a game served IF the cause of the forfeit was the opponent. If the cause of the forfeit is the offending coach/parent team then the scrimmage shall not count as a game served.

11. No Contact Rule:

Base runners shall be obligated to slide at second, third and home base only if there is a legitimate play in process at the base. Upon the umpire's discretion, any malicious contact shall result in the offending player being out on the play and/or being ejected from the game.

12. Jewelry:

No Jewelry of any kind is allowed to be worn by players.

13. Appeals:

All appeals made by a team must come from the head coach to the plate umpire.

14. Protests:

Protests occur in a situation when a head coach believes that an umpire has misinterpreted a playing rule for a given situation, has failed to apply the correct rule to a given situation or failed to impose the correct penalty for a given violation. Judgment calls (such as safe or out, base touched or not touched, whether field is fit to resume play, whether there was or was not interference, etc.) are not items that can be protested.

a. Head coach MUST notify plate umpire of intent to protest prior to the next pitch in the game. At this time the umpire will have scorekeeper make notation as to place in game (outs, runners, time remaining and situation being protested for reference).

b. The game will continue to its regular conclusion based upon the calls made on the field.

c. A protest will only be heard provided the coach has complied with section A, above, and then provides a written protest including all facts surrounding the protest including the rule and/or section of the rulebook in question and all other essential facts surrounding the protest. Formal Protest letter must be received by USL Board within 48 hours of the conclusion of the game and must include a \$150 protest fee. (Protest fee is returned if protest is upheld - otherwise the fee goes into the USL financial account.)

d. Once a protest has been properly lodged it will be heard and ruled upon by the USL Executive Board using appropriate commissioners and other board members and officials as appropriate to understand the situation and reach their conclusion.

e. Should a protest be upheld, the game shall be scheduled to be restarted from the point of the protest with the correct rule / penalty imposed on the play in question. If either team does not participate in the scheduled conclusion of the game, the game shall be forfeited and the head coach of that team shall be subject to disciplinary action by the USL Board.

15. Pre-game on field warm-ups -

Essentially the 15 minutes prior to the start of the first game and the available time between games (usually 15 minutes, but not always) should be split equally between the two teams playing. Visiting team should take infield first so that at the conclusion of the home team on field warm-up the game will start. Umpires will NOT hold the start of the game in order to allow a team to complete warm ups as it holds up later games. Both team's coaches should be mindful of "sharing" the pre-game warm-up time. A team not respecting the other team's warm-up time is NOT a game protest-able situation and will NOT hold-up the start of the game, but a complaint should be forwarded to the appropriate division commissioner.

Coach Pitch Division: Each team bats the entire line up (All Players).

- a. There is a maximum of seven (7) runs per half inning.
- b. The baseline does not exist until the ball is put in play. Baseline for the runner is 3 foot only when a tag is being applied by a defensive player.

T-Ball Divisions: Each team bats the entire line up (All Players).

- a. All players on a team bat each half inning.
- b. The three foot arc used for 5/6 Coach Pitch is also used for T-Ball.
- c. Each batter gets four (4) swings off the tee. If the 4th swing results in a foul ball the batter is out.
- d. All batters will take four (4) swings. The coach can pitch to players, players can take their swings from the tee, or any combination that equates to four (4) swings total.
- e. The baseline does not exist until the ball is put in play. Baseline for the runner is 3 foot only when a tag is being applied by a defensive player.

T-Ball: Everyone plays defense each inning (that includes the entire team, all players).

Coach Pitch: defense players shall be 10 on the field.

Coach Pitch and T-Ball: Each team will be allowed no more than five (5) adults in the dugout to coach the team and/or manage the dugout. No more than three (3) adults in the outfield while on defense. a. No coach shall be sitting on a bucket during the game on the field. Buckets must remain inside the dugout. b. A coach is only allowed one defensive timeout per inning. If a coach calls two timeouts in an inning, that team's player-pitcher will be removed from that position for the remainder of the game.

Coach Pitch Divisions:

1. Each team must have nine (9) players to start a game. If any team falls below nine (9) players due to an ejection of a player then that team will forfeit. If the players are lost for any other reason (i.e. sickness, injury, etc.) then the team may fall to as low as seven (7) players to complete a game.

a. T-Ball Divisions: Each season once the number of players per team is set, the minimum amount required to start a game will be set.

b. If a team has enough players to start a game, but has late arriving players the following provisions apply:

i. If the late arriving player is at the bottom of the lineup, the coach can elect to have the player removed from the lineup when his turn at bat comes up without an out being called or can keep him in the lineup and take the out. Once the player has been "scratched" from the lineup he cannot enter the game should he arrive afterwards. The coach can take the out his first turn and elect at a later at bat to remove from the lineup without penalty.

ii. If the late arriving player is anywhere in the lineup except at the bottom, that player at bat will be recorded as an out per BPA rules for the entire duration of the game (or until he arrives at the game).

2. If a player leaves the game due to sickness or injury those players' subsequent at bats will be passed over and are not an out. If a player is ejected from the game or leaves by his or the coaches own choice then the subsequent at bats will be recorded as an out. Once a player is removed from the game he/she

may not reenter the game. (Removed from a game means he/she misses a turn at bat – our free substitution rules allows defensive changes at any time and is not considered removal from a game.)

3. Bat slinging:

- a. Player – if the same player has two (2) incidents during the same game, he/she will be called out and may be ejected from the game if the umpire feels there is malicious intent. While this is not an automatic ejection, the umpire ruling is final and may not be appealed.
- b. No Team warnings.

4. When it is mathematically impossible for a team to catch-up the game shall be called by the umpires after one hour of play and all players on both teams have had at least one at-bat (Coach Pitch Divisions only – T-Ball will play by regular time limit).

5. If a tie occurs during the regular season at the conclusion of the last regular inning started within the time limit then the game shall end in a tie. No extra inning shall be played. If all regular innings have been played AND there is time left on the game clock then one additional inning may be played if a tie exists.

6. Coach-Pitcher Rules:

- a. The coach pitcher must pitch overhand to his batters.
- b. The coach pitcher must position themselves in a straight line at any distance greater than half way between the pitching rubber (midpoint of the pitcher's circle) and the plate from the batter. NOTE: In 7/8 Coach Pitch Division, the coach-pitcher must position themselves with at least one foot in the pitching circle to start their delivery to the batter.

7. Specific Rules Governing Defensive Play:

- a. Defensive Substitutions: A coach may request time to change his players defensive alignment one time in a given inning and only twice during the course of a game. If an umpire deems that the defensive substitutions are an attempt to delay the game the umpire can refuse to allow the substitution and resume the game.
- b. Players must play their assigned positions:
 - i. A defender is not allowed to “chase” batters or runners all over the field in an attempt to tag them out instead of throwing the ball to another defensive player.
 - ii. Defenders are NOT allowed to roll the ball from one player to another – they must attempt an overhand throw. Nor are they allowed to throw the ball directly into the ground in an attempt to circumvent a “real” throw.
 - iii. Run down rule: A defensive player may pursue (run down) and tag an offensive player to the next base only. Example: 1st baseman can tag runner going to 2nd base but not to third. A second baseman can tag a runner going from 1st to 2nd or 2nd to 3rd but cannot tag a runner going from 3rd to home. Exception: If the base runner overruns the base, then the defensive player may apply the tag. This is a judgment call by the umpire and is at umpire’s sole discretion. This is an attempt to let all of our players learn the true game of baseball.

c. Catcher Requirements: The catcher is not allowed to position themselves past the 3- foot arc (foul/fair arc for t-ball) to field a thrown ball allowing the pitcher to become the primary defender on a play at the plate. (The catcher is allowed to go get a thrown ball in the infield if there is no other fielder in position to make the play and then either come back to home or relay the ball to the pitcher at home plate.

d. Player-Pitcher Requirements:

i. The player-pitcher must position themselves with at least one foot inside the pitching circle and must remain there until the ball is hit.

ii. If the player-pitcher fields the ball inside the pitching circle, they must throw the ball to any base in order to attempt to record an out. They are not allowed to run and tag a player.

iii. If the player-pitcher fields the ball outside of the pitching circle, he may tag a runner attempting to advance on the same half of the field where he fields the ball. The “same half of the field” is determined by an imaginary line running the middle of the home plate to second base. (For example: If the player-pitcher fields the ball on the 3rd base half, he must throw the ball to 1st base in an attempt to retire the batter. He cannot chase the batter and tag him out as he would be crossing the half-way mark. He could have tagged a runner attempting to advance from 3rd base to home since he fielded the ball on that half of the field.)

e. Defensive Coaches: Coaches in the outfield are required to position themselves behind all outfields. If a coach is not behind all players an umpire can award bases based on interference / assistance of the coach. If a coach physically interferes with a player (touches or otherwise moves the player) the coach may also be restricted to the dugout or ejected from the game based on the severity of the infraction. This is at the umpire’s discretion. (There is no difference in coach locations for T-Ball Divisions.)

f. T-Ball Division Exceptions: Since 3/4 T-Ball Division will typically be playing with less than 9 players on a team the following exceptions are allowed:

i. A team IS required to have a catcher.

ii. Offensive Coaches are to be positioned in the same manner as all other divisions at first and third base. A second base offensive coach is allowed, however that coach must stay on the outfield side of second base as close to the outfield as possible and ensure they are not in the way of any play. Coach at home plate MUST remove the bat and tee from the area of home plate in the event of a play being made there.

8. Time will be called when the lead runner abandons any effort to advance to the next bag (no cat and mouse or anything other than legitimate running to the next base will be allowed). Time will ONLY be called by the home plate umpire. There is no “halfway” line between bases for trailing runners. When time is called the runners return to the LAST base they occupied.

Kid Pitch Divisions (9-10 and 11-12):

1. No pitcher shall pitch more than the allowed number of pitches per game or pitches per week as shown in the chart below. The week starts on Monday and ends on Sunday. Any pitcher reaching the maximum pitches per day in a game must complete the required rest period as listed below before he/she is eligible to pitch again. (Example: A pitcher in the 9/10 division pitches 40 pitches when he/she is replaced. That pitcher is now not eligible to pitch for two calendar days. If that game was played on Saturday morning that player would not be eligible to pitch either Sunday or Monday as rest days.)

a. EXCEPTION: A pitcher is allowed to complete pitching to the batter at the plate when a game or weekly pitch limit is reached. If at the pitch limit they cannot start pitching to a new batter.

b. VIOLATION ENFORCEMENT: Penalties for overuse in a game/week: It is the Head Coaches responsibility to ensure that your pitchers AS WELL AS your opponent's pitchers are not overused. The opposing Head Coach may challenge the pitch count by presenting the USL online pitch count to the umpire or board member on duty. Upon discovery of a pitcher being beyond their maximum count, that pitcher will be removed from pitching at that time. The violating team will be charged a team out at the beginning of its next at-bat (i.e., No player will be charged an out, but the team will begin with one out). If the violating team has no additional at-bats, the opposing team will be awarded a base on ball. No game will be forfeited based on pitcher overuse. A coach found to have used a player minimally above the pitch count will receive a one game suspension on their first violation, a three-game suspension on their second violation, and an indefinite suspension on their third violation. Excessive over use at any time may result in the Head Coach being indefinitely suspended. A player that exceeds the pitch count will be ineligible to pitch during the next week of scheduled divisional games (Note: The website displays the official pitch count. Head Coaches may contact the webmaster by noon of game day to dispute any pitch count discrepancies).

c. Double-headers: In the event a double-header is scheduled the below table applies to a pitcher for the entire day (both games).

2. There is a free substitution for all player positions except pitcher. Only the starting pitcher may return to pitch in the same game. If the starting pitcher is removed for a second time or the coach has made a second trip to the mound in one inning, that pitcher cannot return to pitch in that game.

3. If a starting pitcher is removed and returns in the same inning, it constitutes another inning pitched.

4. If the catcher misses the third strike "the ball is live" unless there are less than two (2) outs and there is a runner on 1st base. If there are less than two (2) outs, a runner is on 1st, and the catcher misses the third strike, then the batter cannot advance.

NOTE: This rule, known as the "dropped third strike rule" will NOT be used in the 9/10 Division.

5. A coach may issue a walk to a batter by informing the home plate umpire. No pitches have to be thrown for an intentional walk. a. A player cannot be intentionally walked more than one time per game. Upon being informed of an intentional walk from a coach, there will be a notation added to the scorebook for that player.

6. 9/10 Division Only: Base Runners must stay on base until the ball passes home plate or is batted into play. If a runner leaves too soon the umpire will declare a "dead ball" and the runner is called out. Once the pitcher, with control of the ball, has approached the mound AND runners are not actively attempting to advance, the ball becomes dead and no runner may advance until the subsequent pitch is thrown to the batter.

7. In addition to the No contact rule, above, head first sliding is discouraged. The nature of a head first slide exposes both the offensive and defensive players to an increased likelihood of injury. While head first sliding is not illegal a needless head first slide can be judged to be malicious / intentional contact. As such the umpire can rule the runner out and/or eject him from the game for such actions.

8. If there are two (2) outs and the pitcher or catcher is on base, the manager may replace them with the player that has last completed their at bat. In the top of the first inning, when using a courtesy runner is used the coach must designate the position the player is going to play in the bottom of the first. That player MUST play that position in the bottom of the first inning. Note this rule does not apply in any "Extra Inning." This is an optional substitution at the coach's discretion, not a mandatory one. (Note: the player to be used is the last one that has completed their at bat and is not a runner. There has been some confusion over whether it is the last batted out, last out, etc.)

9. Each team must have nine (9) players to start a game. If any team falls below nine (9) players due to an ejection of a player then that team will forfeit. If the players are lost for any other reason (i.e. sickness, injury, etc.) then the team may fall to as low as seven (7) players to complete a game.

a. If a team has enough players to start a game, but has late arriving players the following provisions apply:

i. If the late arriving player is at the bottom of the lineup, the coach can elect to have the player removed from the lineup when his turn at bat comes up without an out being called or can keep him in the lineup and take the out. Once the player has been "scratched" from the lineup he cannot enter the game should he arrive afterwards. The coach can take the out his first turn and elect at a later at bat to remove from the lineup without penalty.

ii. If the late arriving player is anywhere in the lineup except at the bottom, that player at bat will be recorded as an out per BPA rules for the entire duration of the game (or until he arrives at the game).

10. If a player leaves the game due to sickness or injury or is ejected from the game, that players subsequent at bats will be recorded as an out. a. EXCEPTION: If a coach has evaluated a player after a collision and needs to remove that player from the game due to suspicion of a concussion (following concussion protocol), the coach shall notify the umpire of the circumstance. The coach shall also (after the game) notify the board member on-duty and fill out an incident report. In this specific instance then the player(s) that are removed from the game are NOT recorded as an out, they are simply skipped in the batting order. Further, a player that is removed in this manner is NOT ALLOWED to participate in game or practice activities until they have been cleared by a medical doctor.

11. Bat slinging: a. Player – if the same player has two (2) incidents during the same game, he/she will be called out and may be ejected from the game if the umpire feels there is malicious intent. While this is not an automatic ejection, the umpire ruling is final and may not be appealed.

12. The "Run Rule" shall apply if the score meets the requirements below in the appropriate inning. The home team must be in the lead in order to call a game before an inning is complete. Run Rule applies as follows: 12 runs ahead after three (3) innings, 10 runs ahead after four (4) innings, and eight (8) runs ahead after five (5) innings.

a. In 9/10 Division there is a maximum of seven runs allowed in an offensive half inning. (Note: All runs that score after the 7th run on the same play shall NOT count.) Since there is a limit to the number of

runs scored per inning the "Run Rule" above shall not apply but rather, the game shall end when it is mathematically impossible for the trailing team to win subject to the time limit in rule 26b.

b. In the 9/10 Division the game shall last at least until everyone on both teams has batted once.

13. If a tie occurs during the regular season at the conclusion of the last regular inning started within the time limit then the game shall end in a tie. No extra inning shall be played. If all regular innings have been played AND there is time left on the game clock then one additional inning may be played if a tie exists.

USL LBSA is governed by the National Federation of High School rules as modified by the below local league rules.