

2025 DLL Rookie League Rules (Coaches' Pitch)

Unless otherwise stated, please refer to the Official Little League Rulebook or the Little League Rule Book App

Coach/Team Responsibilities

- **Home team arrives early to make sure field is in playable condition, this includes:**
 - Home team coach is responsible for communicating with assistants if unable to make it. Most of the time, the only thing needed will be the batter's box/foul line, but the following protocols should be observed:
 - If assistants are unable to make it, home team coach is responsible for asking visiting team for help, or having some contingency plan ready (trustworthy parent, board member, coach from another team, etc)
 - Raking and lining the batter's box and base lines, spraying foul lines if necessary
 - Chalk liner and spray paint applicator are located in Rookie shed
 - Filling in hole in front of pitcher's rubber with mound clay if necessary
 - Use mound clay - spread clay/water with hose, tamp, rake dry dirt on top.
 - Obtaining 2 game balls from shed (top shelf)
 - If no game balls on top shelf, extras are kept in major/minor concession stand
 - Making sure the scoreboard is turned on and functioning
 - Panel is located on the partial light pole behind 1B dugout. DO NOT turn off any circuits related to irrigation. Only scoreboard and rookie shed circuits should be used.
 - Removal of minor amounts of water on field, if needed
- **Visiting team to provide volunteer to run scoreboard**
 - Adults should run the scoreboard. NOT children. If no adults are available, no children under the age of 12 unless they are responsible and experienced with the scoreboard
 - There should never be multiple children in the press box without a responsible adult
 - Trash should be cleaned up after the game
- **Both teams should keep score in the GameChanger app**
 - This should be performed by a parent or an assistant coach
- At the completion of each game, winning team should notify the division director the outcome and score of the game if the score is not visible in GameChanger
 - League commissioner should collect the scores and enter into Blue Sombrero

Bats

- USA baseball bats only (no USSSA bats)
 - A player using a non-sanctioned bat who receives a pitch is considered out
 - A team that violates this rule twice in one game loses a base coach, per LL rules

Batting/Fielding Lineup

- Continuous batting lineup (every player bats)

- Free defensive substitutions
- No minimum defensive play rule
- 10 players allowed on field (left-center fielder, right-center fielder)

The Coach Pitcher

- Pitching machine no longer in use, **coaches pitch the ball from 35 feet (1 foot should at least be touching the line when the ball is released)**
 - This can be marked with a chalk line, but not mandatory
 - If this is not being followed, line will be marked
- Each batter receives 5 pitches
 - Hit batters DO NOT receive a base
 - There are no walks - if batter doesn't swing on 5th pitch, he/she is considered out
 - There are no "foul outs" - batter will continue receiving pitches until the last pitch is either missed or put into play
- The coach pitcher should make an attempt to move from obstructing any play, which may involve removing him/herself entirely from the fair area of play
- If a coach pitcher is hit by a ball
 - The ball is ruled a dead ball and the pitch is replayed if the coach makes a reasonable attempt to move
 - The batter is out if the coach does not make an attempt to move or attempts to influence the path of the ball in any way

The Player Pitcher

- **A player pitcher should have at least one foot on the circular portion of the pitcher's mound**
 - This does not include any extension of the mound toward home plate
 - The player pitcher should start a safe distance behind the coach pitcher at all times and should never start in front of the coach

Catcher

- When the catcher *of the previous inning* is on base with 2 outs, a courtesy runner may be used for that player. The courtesy runner must be the runner who made the last out
- If a team is using a catcher that struggles to catch the ball, a parent or assistant coach should be positioned nearby to help with pace of the game

The Runner

- Defensive team must stop advancement of lead runner to end the play
 - If umpire present - he/she is responsible for calling time out once lead runner has been stopped (within reason)
 - If the ball is thrown to the coach pitcher and should have been caught, the play is ended
 - A coach pitcher should not purposely avoid the ball to keep the play active
 - If no umpire present, common sense should be used to "end the play". If the lead runner heads back to their current base and the ball is controlled by an infielder, a coach should NOT send that runner to "keep the play alive". If that runner originally rounded the base immediately with intent to score, it is a up to the infielder to throw that runner out.
- Sending the runner to the next base:

- A common point of contention is the appropriate amount of bases for a runner to take on an overthrow
 - A coach should not send a runner if the fielder is making a reasonable attempt to stop the play and doing so would clearly be an attempt to induce a bad throw
 - It is appropriate to send a runner 1 extra base when:
 1. There has been an overthrow
 2. A player has the ball but is not paying attention or making an attempt to stop the play
- For all these situations, common sense and the primary goal of teaching kids how to play competitive baseball should be kept in mind
- Base Path:
 - **The base path is established when a tag attempt occurs and is defined as a straight line from the runner to the base**
 - A runner is out when running more than 3 feet outside the base path from a tag unless it is to avoid interfering with a fielder making a play
- Steals
 - No steals on passed balls
- Interference
 - If a 1st or 3rd base coach touches a base runner in order to influence his/her path, that base runner is considered out
 - The runner will be called out for offensive interference when the runner fails to avoid a fielder who is actively making a play on a batted ball. All other runners will return to the last base that was touched legally
 - The runner will be considered out if contacted by a batted ball in fair territory
 - If a fielder not making an attempt on a batted ball makes contact with the baserunner (who is appropriately within the runner's lane), that runner will be avoided the next base on defensive interference, provided that the runner attempts to go to the next base and doesn't turn back

Mercy Rule

- 6 run limit per inning
 - Unlimited runs in 6th inning of game
 - If 6th inning is not reached and any lesser inning is deemed the last inning of the game, 6 run limit/inning still applies
- Run rule enforced
 - 13 runs after 4th inning
 - 7 runs after 5th inning
 - If visiting team leads by the above amounts, home team will have a chance to bat

Game Duration

- 6 inning games
 - No new inning to start after 1 hour 15 mins
 - e.g. A game starts at 5:00pm. At 6:15, the visiting team is batting in the top of the 4th inning. After visitors are done batting, the home team (if needed) would have a chance to bat and then game play would end.

- e.g. A game starts at 5:00pm. At 6:15, the home team is batting in the bottom of the 4th inning. If the team is ahead, the game would conclude. If the home team is losing, they would have the remainder of their 3 outs and then the game would end.
- Umpires and coaches should know when the 1 hour and 15 minute mark is approaching
- The next inning begins when the third out of the previous inning is made (not when the first pitch of the new inning is thrown)
 - This way the next inning cannot be delayed by a slow warm-up
- No time limit for tournament championship game
- Clock begins when home team takes the field for warm-ups in top of 1st inning
 - Both coaches (and umpire, if present, should take note of this time)

Rainouts

- If the field is in playable condition and the intensity of rain isn't so great as to make game play difficult, games will continue as long as possible.
 - If a game is stopped due to rain and 3 full innings (or at least ½ the time of the game) have been played, this will be considered a full game and no makeup game will be scheduled.
 - Make-up games will be scheduled only as much as to meet the minimum number of games mandated by Little League International (12 games)
- The decision whether or not to play a game based on rain depends on (1) the amount of rain, (2) the duration, (3) the condition of the fields before the rain, and (4) the availability of help to dry the fields before game time
 - Conversations involving the coaches, division director, and president of the league will take place prior to game time to make a decision
- Lightning delay: 30 minutes
- Thunder delay: 15 minutes

Tournament

Regular league rules apply for tournament games and unless otherwise mentioned below.

- The tournament will be single elimination.
- Tournament seeds will be determined using regular season records.
 - Tournament seeds will be determined using the following criteria for use in case of need for tiebreaker: win/loss record (win percentage), head-to-head, lowest runs allowed ratio (runs allowed/runs scored)
 - Higher seed will be considered home team throughout the tournament, including championship game next.
- It is recommended that defensive coaches not be on the field during the tournament