



## 2019 TPLL DOUBLE A RULES

This overview provides detail on the 2019 Double A rules this year. We will also furnish a copy of this memo to our Head Umpire to ensure that all of our managers, coaches and umpires are on the same page with respect to the application of our rules. Each team will receive a current Rule Book, which you should review and bring to all games. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

1. **Home Team and Field Set-Up.** The home team is responsible for setting up the field (organizing the dugout, raking, dragging the field, etc.) before the game as necessary, and dragging the field after the game. It is suggested that the home team coaching staff arrive an hour before the game in order to set up and prep the field. This takes about 15 minutes and leaves plenty of time to warm-up your team.
2. **Clean up.** Both teams are responsible for cleanup of the field, dugouts and respective fan stands. PLEASE ENSURE YOUR PLAYERS DISPOSE OF ALL TRASH, INCLUDING BOTTLES, WRAPPERS, ETC. Our continued access and use of all fields is contingent on our collective ability to maintain them in nice order.
3. **Dugouts.** The home team gets the 1<sup>st</sup> base dugout. The home team also supplies 3 GAME BALLS to the Home Plate Ump the game balls, though both teams should have extras available.
4. **10 Fielders.** AA is an instructional league, and we believe that kids learn more by playing than sitting. To get more playing time for each player, we allow 10 fielders, 4 of whom are outfielders. These must be true outfielders, playing 4 across (left field, left center, right center and right field). They must be positioned in the outfield grass—no “short-centers” or infielders disguised as outfielders are allowed. Please station all outfielders at least 10-feet into the grass at Bel Aire, and no closer than the edge of the grass at Grenada —this league is for kids, and it is embarrassing for our younger or inexperienced hitters to see the outfielders so close.

- 5. Game Time Limit/How it Works.** AA games have a limit of six innings or two hours (explained below), whichever occurs first. No new inning shall be started once 2 hours have passed since the beginning of a game. The coaches and the umpire should decide on the exact start time for the game, and if the end of an inning is reached and 1 hour and 59 minutes have passed, then the next inning shall be played in full even if more than two hours elapses during the inning. If 2 hours has been reached at the end of an inning, then the game would be over. We do have ties in AA regular season, so that has no bearing on whether you continue to play the game. Once we reach our playoffs, all games shall be played to completion without regard to time, and extra innings shall be played if needed to determine a winner. Please note: we do not want the 2-hour rule to be used as a managerial strategy. If an umpire decides that a team is specifically stalling to use the 2-hour rule to its benefit, then they can give the coaches a warning that if it continues the game will be extended. Also, the time when we check to see if the 2 hours is up is directly when the LAST OUT OF THE PREVIOUS INNING occurs (taking the field slowly will therefore not help you).
- 6. Batting the Full Line-up/Last Batter Rule.** All teams must allow their entire roster to bat, rather than limiting the eligible batters to the 10 position players. Your team must bat entirely through the order to the last batter of the inning in the event that three outs do not occur sooner. In addition, the National Little League rule states that no player may bat more than once in an inning. Regarding the last batter, please keep the following in mind:
- a. Each team is entitled to bat through the order, regardless of whether one team has more or fewer players than the other team. In other words, a team with 12 players present will bat all 12 batters, while a team with 10 players will bat only 10.
  - b. With the last batter, the play ends when (a) a third out is made, (b) when no further play is possible, or (c) when the pitcher has the ball and is on the mound or (d) the first baseman has control of the ball, or (e) when a defensive player has secure possession of the ball and is standing on home plate. When any of these occur, play is dead.
  - c. The manager of the team at bat must notify the opponent that the current batter is the last batter of the inning.
  - d. If the team at bat fails to notify the opponent of “last batter” status, one of two things will occur. If the batter strikes out or is put out, the play stands and the inning is over. In that case, no runs may score. If the batter gets a hit of any kind, he/she is credited only with a single. No runs may score unless the last batter was at bat with the bases loaded, in which case only one run will score. (In other words, even if the undeclared last batter hits a grand slam, only one run will count.)

- e. The defensive team may not walk the last batter intentionally; doing so is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. If, in the judgement of the umpire, the last batter has been walked intentionally, the pitcher or manager may be disqualified from further play, with or without warning. The umpire will call “no pitch” on any ball to the last batter which, in the umpire’s judgement, was an intentionally thrown ball.
7. **5-Run Rule.** Under National Little League rules applicable to Double A, no team may score more than 5 runs in an inning. For example if the first five batters up all score, that team’s at-bat ends. There is only one exception to this rule: in the designated last inning of the game. If at the beginning of the game, it is decided that the game will only be played through 5 innings, the designated last inning is the 5th inning. If at the beginning of the game, it is decided that the game will go the full 6 innings, the designated last inning is the 6th inning. During the designated last inning, more than five runs may be scored (although the last batter rule still applies). Please note that this is a rule that only applies to the designated last inning. If, by virtue of the 2-hour time limit, the last inning is the 5th (or earlier) inning and the designated last inning is the 6th inning, the five run limit continues to apply.
8. **Playing Time.** We want all players to get significant playing time. No player should be on the bench for two consecutive innings. In a full six-inning game, every player must play in the field for at least three innings. In addition, one of the innings in the field must be at one of the 6 infield positions. If a coach does not comply, they will be subject to suspension by the league.
9. **Stealing.** Stealing is not allowed nor is leading. The player must stay on the base until the ball is put into play - there is no leading off the base.
10. **Pitch Count, Innings and Catcher Restrictions.** There are TPLL limits on the number of pitches a player can throw per game in Double A, and mandatory days of rest needed depending on the pitch count. The number of maximum pitches any pitcher may throw in Double A is 50 pitches.

If a pitcher reaches these maximums while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until the batter reaches base or is put out, and then the pitcher would be removed.

In addition, based on the number of pitches thrown, a minimum days of rest are required.

The new days of rest guidelines are as follows:

- If a player pitches 41-50 pitches in a day, 3 calendar days of rest must be observed.

- If a player pitches 31-40 pitches in a day, 2 calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 21-30 pitches in a day, 1 calendar day of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, 0 calendar days of rest must be observed.

By way of example, if player A throws 36 pitches on Thursday, he/she will not be able to pitch on Saturday, since he/she needs two days of rest before pitching again (rest days of Friday and Saturday). If player B pitches 48 pitches on Saturday, he/she would be required 3 days rest, and thus not be eligible until the following Wednesday (rest days Sunday, Monday and Tuesday).

**Innings Limit** -- In addition, with the forethought of protecting young arms and developing pitching staffs, there are two new rules to consider and strategize. Maximum innings for anyone pitcher in any game is 3 innings. If he/she throws one pitch to start a 4<sup>th</sup> inning, it is grounds for forfeit.

**Number of Pitchers Requirement** - We also have implemented a mandatory 3 pitchers be used in every game. This allows a coach to pitch three separate pitchers in 3, 2 and 1 innings, or 2, 2 and 2 innings, or any similar combination that stays within this rule.

**Catcher Restrictions** - In addition, there are restrictions applicable to pitcher-catchers. A pitcher who delivers 30 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day. Likewise, if a player catches more than three innings (he/she appears as a catcher in a fourth inning), he/she cannot pitch that day.

Both teams should keep track of the number of pitches thrown. Please make sure to count the pitch that is hit by the batter as it is often the one that teams forget to chart and leads to discrepancies. We would like the coaches to confer after each inning as to the pitch count, and in a discrepancy that can't be solved we would defer to the team of the pitcher.

- 11. Consecutive Walks.** Should a pitcher throw 4 balls (regardless of strike count) to four consecutive batters, or five total in an inning, he/she must be replaced by another pitcher.
- 12. Expanded Strike Zone.** The umpires will be instructed to increase their strike zone by one ball width in each direction (up, down, inside and outside).
- 13. No Walk Rule For 1st Half Of The Season.** When a pitcher throws a 4<sup>th</sup> ball, regardless of the strike count, a coach will place a tee on home plate and the batter will hit from the tee. The maximum a player can get when hitting off

the tee is a double. The coach should stay close, and immediately remove the tee. We will evaluate the results after 1<sup>st</sup> half of season, and will be looking to you guys for feedback on how this goes. A player cannot strike out when hitting from the tee. The batter should not adjust their stance when hitting off the tee. (This is in order to prevent players aligning their stance to hit the ball up the baseline.)

**14. Tournament Seeding.** 1<sup>st</sup> half of season games will not count toward playoff seeding. Only games will count toward playoff seeding - not scrimmages. At the beginning of the season and after the schedule is finalized, coaches and the commissioner will align and agree on a start date of when games will begin to count toward seeding.

**15. Play Ends** when the pitcher makes contact with the baseball in the vicinity of the pitcher's mound. The goal is to get our players to deliver the baseball back to the pitcher, as opposed to making errant throws and allowing additional bases for baserunners.

Play is also stopped on "force out attempt at first base and the first baseman has secured the ball". This is only valid when an attempt is made at a force out. Play does not stop on a ball thrown from the outfield to the first baseman on an extra base hit. The runner can advance to second base if there is an overthrow to first base.

**16. Runners** in process before the pitcher makes contact with the ball will be allowed to advance to the base to which they were running, but no further. Runners must be halfway to the next base if they are allowed to advance.

#### **17. Other Rules You Should Know**

- a. Warm up pitches should be kept to a maximum of 5.
- b. Unless and until they are granted a time-out by the umpire, coaches should stay in or immediately adjacent to the dugout. Coaches have routinely violated this rule in the past, and we ask for compliance this year.
- c. Per the national rule, a manager is allowed 3 visits to the same pitcher in an inning (he/she gets pulled on the third visit) or 4 in a game to that pitcher (pulled on 4<sup>th</sup>).
- d. You may have a maximum of three adults in the dugout with your team (typically the manager, the assistant and another). No fans or interested parents should be on or near the playing field. Coaches are responsible for enforcing this rule.

- e. You may use two adults as the base coaches, provided that a third coach is in the dugout with the players. Otherwise, a player wearing a helmet should serve as a base coach.
- f. Little League rules state that coaches may not warm up pitchers. During our regular season, however, we allow coaches to do so to keep the game moving along.
- g. There is no “on-deck” circle allowed; the next hitter must remain in the dugout (not swinging a bat) until his/her turn at bat.
- h. We will have a no bunting rule in effect for the first half of season. After the first half of the season, and in the playoffs, we will have a 2 fair bunts rule in effect per game. What this means is that a team will be allowed to have a maximum of 2 batters put bunts into play per game, whether they result in an out, a sacrifice bunt, or a hit. If a player bunts after their team has put 2 fair bunts down, then it will count as a strike, (including strike 3), if it exceeds the limit, and it will be a dead ball with no advancing by the runners.

**18. Umpires.** We use youth umpires for most games. Coaches should introduce themselves at a pre-game meeting at home plate and get to know the Umpires by first name. (Umpires are instructed to do the same, but some kids may be a bit intimidated). At all times, it is essential that coaches, assistant coaches and parents refrain from any and all criticism. These kids are learning as well. They will make bad calls or mistakes occasionally, though overall they do an excellent job. If you believe there has been an error in enforcing a rule, you may approach the umpire, and have an appropriately toned discussion. Have familiarity with these rules (or have a rule book in hand). At no times, may you challenge a judgment call. Instant replay is not in our budget (!). Please help police your parents as well. Our youth umpires deserve our very best behavior and respect.

**19. Score Keeping.** Each team needs to designate a scorekeeper to keep track of the stats for each team using GameChanger. The recommendation is that you have at least 2 people who know the program so that if one isn't present, you are still capturing the data. The scorekeepers for each team should confer at the end of every half inning or sooner if one believes the 5-run rule has been met.

**20. Playoff Games.** All playoff games will go to six innings or until a winner is determined, whichever is longer, (extra innings if needed). If a playoff game cannot be completed, (e.g. because of darkness or the start of the minor

league game), then the game will be completed at a subsequent date from the point that the game was stopped, (i.e. top of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning, two outs, runner on 2<sup>nd</sup>), and will NOT revert back to the last complete inning.

**21. Game Results.** Both coaches should email game results and pitch counts by player to the Commissioner, Kevin Kissling at [kkissling@mac.com](mailto:kkissling@mac.com) as soon as you are able following the games.

**22. ANY ISSUES YOU HAVE.** Call or text Kevin Kissling at 415-350-9596