



## 2020 TPLL DOUBLE A RULES

This overview provides detail on the 2020 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. Please unlock the bathrooms before the game, and remember to relock them if you are the only game of the day.
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, 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.** For the beginning part of the year, stealing is not allowed. Leading off is never allowed in any Little League age group through Majors. The player must stay on the base until the ball is put into play.

a.Second part of the year and for interleague play, modified stealing is allowed.

The primary purpose of these rules is to encourage the development of more and better skilled catchers without impacting the outcome of the game unduly (i.e., we want you to give more kids a chance to play behind the plate without fear that it will lead to many steals of home-plate, and we want to encourage catchers to throw to second rather than hold the ball). These rules will also encourage teams to “earn” runs by putting the ball in play rather than “stealing” home, which rarely occurs in “real baseball.” Accordingly:

i. No Stealing Home Rule

1. No player will be allowed to steal home plate under any circumstances. Put simply, a player can score only on: a bases-loaded walk, or a continuous play resulting from a batted ball.

2. Example:

- a. A player stealing third may not advance home even if the catcher makes a wild throw into the outfield in an attempt to throw the runner out at third.
- b. In the event there are runners on first and third, and the player on first attempts to steal second, the runner on third may not advance home on the catcher's throw to second base, even if that throw is wild and goes into the outfield.

ii. One Stolen Base at a Time Rule

1. No player stealing a base may advance past the one being stolen. All steals will be one base at a time (except for home, which may not be stolen under any circumstance).
2. Example: if a player is stealing second and the catcher makes a wild throw into the outfield, the runner must stay at second base and may not advance further.

iii. No Leaving the Base Until the Catcher Catches the Ball Rule

1. We do not allow lead-offs at any time. Typically, we do not allow a runner to leave the base until a pitched ball has crossed home plate. Because this will be most kids' first attempt at pitching and catching, we want to avoid games getting out of control based on a pitcher and/or catcher's effectiveness. Therefore, we will not allow a runner to leave the base unless the catcher catches the pitch cleanly. If a runner leaves early or after the catcher drops the ball, or on a wild pitch, he/she will be sent back to the previous base.
2. Please note: we do not want this rule to be used as a managerial strategy. The catcher must make every effort to catch the pitch. Should it appear to the umpire that the catcher is intentionally dropping the ball so as to prevent a runner or runners from stealing, the umpire may elect to award the runner(s) with one base.

iv. No Delayed Steals

1. Base runners attempting to steal a base must commit and go. They must leave the base when the catcher catches the ball and they must complete the steal. The runner commits to

go when they take their first step toward the base they are attempting to steal.

2. If they stop, turn around and head back to the base they started from, they are out.
3. In the case of a double steal, both runners will have to go when the catcher catches the ball.
  - a. Example: If the runner on 2nd takes off for 3rd when the catcher catches the ball but the runner on 1st delays their steal, the runner leaving 1st must return to 1st.

**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 that is 5 or more innings. In a 6 inning 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.

The pitcher must meet only one of the following requirements to get credit toward the 3 pitcher rule:

- Pitch 1 inning which is defined as three outs.
  - If they come into the game with 2 outs, make one pitch that the batter grounds out they would need to come back in the next inning and pitch through 2 more outs.
- Face 4 batters

**Pitcher/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.

A player cannot pitch if they have caught 4 innings or more that same day. A catcher receiving 1 pitch in the 4 inning constitutes 4 innings

A player who caught 3 innings or less and then pitches 21 pitches or more cannot go back to catcher that day

Continuation rule: if the pitcher reaches 20 pitches while facing a batter, the pitcher can continue to pitch and maintain their eligibility to catch until that batter is out or on base or the third out is called.

Warm up pitches don't count

A pitcher can play the position of catcher the remainder of the day if they pitch 40 pitches or less. If they pitch 41 pitches, they cannot catch

Continuation rule: if the pitchers starts a batter with under 40 pitches, they can complete pitching to that batter until the batter is on base or out or the third out is called. That will count as 40 pitches or less and allow for them to catch 3 innings. If they pitch to the next batter, they cannot catch.

Once a pitcher is pulled out of the pitching position they cannot return to pitch for the remainder of the game.

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. **Expanded Strike Zone.** The umpires will be instructed to increase their strike zone by one ball width inside and outside. The top and bottom of the strike zone will be the standard letters and knees.
12. **No Walk Rule.** 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 single. The coach should stay close, and immediately remove the tee.
  - a. A player cannot strike out when hitting from the tee.
  - b. The batter cannot 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.). Batters also cannot jump from the back of the batter's box to gain momentum prior to swinging.
  - c. If the batter grounds out (example 6-3 put out), the player is out and Game-Changer is recorded as a 6-3 put out
  - d. If the player gets a hit, they are limited to a single regardless of where the ball is put into play or how the defense handles it. Gamechanger is recorded as a walk, not a hit.
  - e. All runners are only allowed to advance one base regardless of how the defense handles the hit.
    - i. Even if 3rd baseman tries to get the runner at 2nd and airmails it into right field - the runner stays at second.
    - ii. Example: runner on 1st is only allowed to advance to 2nd, runner on 2nd only allowed to advance to 3rd, runner on 3rd only allowed to advance to home

This only applies to a ball 4 situation. If the batter is hit by a pitch, the batter takes first base; he/she does not hit off the tee.

13. **Tournament Seeding.** All officially scheduled games count toward playoff seeding.

**14. Play Ends In the first half of the season,** it is a dead ball when the ball is thrown to the pitcher on or in the vicinity of the mound. We will ask field maintenance to place a large circle around the mound to aid the umpire's determination of if the pitcher is "in the vicinity of the mound."

**a. In the second half of the season,** the ball is dead when the pitcher secures the baseball on or within very close proximity to 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.

**15. Runners** in process before the pitcher creates a dead ball situation (as defined in [14] above), 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.

**a. Overthrows** – Runners can only advance one base on an overthrow to any base.

**16. Errant throws** to first base

- If the throw to the first baseman goes beyond the fence, over the fence or in the dugout, the runners advance one base
- If the throw to the first baseman lands anywhere else, the runner is allowed to advance one base. If the first baseman tries to throw the runner out at second base, and throws it into the leftfield, the runner can advance an additional base because that is considered another overthrow.

**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 four adults in the dugout with your team (typically the manager, the assistant and 2 others). 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 dug-out (not swinging a bat) until his/her turn at bat.
- h. No bunting
- i. If a player is hit by a pitch, that player will go to first base. The player does not get the option to hit off the tee if they are hit by a pitch; they get to go to first base.

**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.** Each coach is responsible for updating their scores within Google Docs within 24 hours of the end of the game. Within the same Doc, each coach is also responsible for typing in each player that pitched (3 pitcher minimum) and how many pitches they threw. The commissioner will review this document and note how many days rest the pitchers are required to have based on the aforementioned pitch count rules.
- 22.**Cheering.** Cheering for your team is allowed at any time; jeering or razzing the other team is not allowed
- 23.**ANY ISSUES YOU HAVE.** Call or text George Graziadei at 415-632-9095