



## TPLL 2021 Rookie Minor Rules

### **PLEASE PRINT THESE AND HAVE THEM WITH YOU AT THE GAMES**

1. **Home Team and Field Set-Up/Break Down.** Field setup such as dragging and lining the field will be performed by TPLL's grounds crew before the first game of the day. The home team is responsible for setting up the pitching machine before the game. Please run the electric cord half way between third base and home plate and use the lighter weight orange cord to plug into the machine as the heavier cord will come unplugged. The electric cord that runs into the field is in play, like a base. Post-game, the home team for the final game of the day (Noon on Saturday) please put away the pitching machine, roll up cords for both the field pitching machine and batting cage, take in bases and put in the base plugs. The home team coaching staff should arrive an hour before the game in order to set up the pitching machine and the cage.
2. **Pregame-Batting Cage & IF/OF.** Each team will be allotted 20 minutes of batting cage time pregame. The pitching machine in the cage uses only JUGS Pearl Baseballs, please do not use any other types of baseballs in the machine. If you are the first game of the day on Saturday or the Thursday game you are also allowed 20 minutes of time on the IF during the time opposite of your cage time if the grounds crew is finished. For teams playing in the noon slot on Saturday generally there is no infield due to the first game still being underway. There is room at Granada for both teams to do pregame warmups deep in the OF (hitting circle, pop fly drills, etc.) if they choose. If the 10 a.m. game ends early and the infield is available, the teams will split the infield time evenly. **There is no access to the batting cage during the game.** Please make sure the cage is locked during the game. Please see schedule below.
  - a. 10 am game:
    - a. Home team: Cage 9:05-9:25, Infield 9:30-9:50
    - b. Visitors Infield 9:05-9:25, Cage 9:30-9:50, please clear and lock cage.
    - c. Head Coach Meeting with Umpires 9:50 a.m.
    - d. First pitch 10:00 am.

- b. Noon game: (generally no Infield for either team due to first game in progress/field prep)
    - a. Home team: Cage 11:05-11:25
    - b. Visiting team: Cage 11:30-11:50, clear and lock cage.
    - c. Head Coach Meeting with Umpires 11:50 a.m.
    - d. First pitch Noon.
  - c. 5 pm game:
    - a. Home team: Cage 4:05-4:25, Infield 4:30-4:50
    - b. Visiting team: Infield 4:05-4:25, Cage 4:30-4:50, clear and lock cage.
    - c. Head Coach Meeting with Umpires 4:50 p.m.
    - d. First pitch 5 p.m.
3. **Clean up.** Both teams are responsible for cleanup of the field, dugouts and respective fan stands. Our continued access and use of all fields is contingent on our ability to maintain a good relationship with RUSD. The one constant complaint from RUSD is trash being left in the stands, dugout area, on top of the trash can and on the field. Please use the trash bags in the shed to collect garbage and place it in the dumpster at Granada (the key to access the dumpster is located in the equipment shed) or take it with you. **Please do not overstuff the garbage can behind the backstop.**
4. **Dugouts.** The home team is in the 1<sup>st</sup> base dugout area. **No dugouts will be used during the 2021 season.** Please have your team set up down the line from the dugouts and place cones so the kids are properly spaced. The home team also supplies the JUGS Pearl game balls. New or lightly used Pearl baseballs are to be used for games, it's recommended that 20-24 balls are provided to the umpire to keep the game moving. To speed up the game, a coach for the defensive team should be positioned near the backstop with a bucket to collect pitched balls for the umpire.
5. **Pitching Machine.** The pitching machine is to be placed in the area where a pitcher would step to complete a pitch, about 12 inches in front of the rubber. The pitch speed is set at 35 mph and it's recommended to keep the ball low in the strike zone. **At any time during an inning** a coach can request that the umpire (with assistance from a coach, if the umpire agrees) adjust the pitching machine up/down and left/right so that pitches cross the plate at an appropriate level for the batters. Only JUGS Pearl Baseballs can be used in the pitching machine. Please make sure that no other brands of baseballs are used. The home team supplies the JUGS Pearl Baseballs for games, usually 20-24.

6. **Pitcher.** The umpire is the “pitcher.” He will feed the pitching machine and keep track of the pitch count per batter, which is limited to 7 pitches. The pitcher is responsible for fielding any throws from the defensive team to him on or near the mound that would result in the desired stopping of a play, as described in Rule 12 below. The pitcher/umpire does not make any defensive plays to record outs for either team.
7. **Batted Balls Hitting Pitching Machine.** A batted ball that hits the pitching machine, or any piece of equipment the umpire is using near the machine (bucket, ball caddy, etc.) is immediately ruled a dead ball, with the batter being credited with a single and each runner awarded one base.
8. **Walks/Strikeouts and Pitch Limit.** There are no walks and no called strikes. A player only gets a strike if he swings and misses, or fouls the ball, there are no called strikes on a take. Otherwise, usual baseball rules apply, three strikes are an out, foul balls do not count for strike three unless caught by the catcher. There is a 7 pitch per player, per at bat limit. If a player fails to put a ball in play within 7 pitches, it is recorded as a strike out on Game Changer, and the next batter comes to the plate. Before the 7<sup>th</sup> pitch is delivered the umpire will call out ‘last pitch.’ The exceptions to the 7-pitch limit are:

  - a. If the machine throws an unhittable pitch at any time in the at bat (ball in the dirt before home plate, over the batter’s head) the umpire may rule ‘no pitch’ and it does not count as one of the 7 pitches. The call of ‘no pitch’ can only be made by the umpire “pitcher” feeding the machine, not the coaches.
  - b. If the pitching machine is out of alignment, not consistently throwing strikes on multiple pitches the umpire shall suspend play and align the machine. Coaches are allowed to assist with adjusting the machine. If this occurs during the middle of an at-bat, the batter resumes the at-bat with the same strike-count and pitch-count that existed before play was suspended.
  - c. If the batter fouls off the 7th pitch the at bat may continue until a ball is put in play, the batter swings and misses, or a hittable pitch (ruled by the umpire) is taken by the batter in which case the batter is out via strike out in Game Changer.
9. **Lineups.** All players on the team in attendance must be included on the batting lineup and bat regardless of whether or not they are playing the field. For example, if a team has 10 players with 9 playing in the field and 1 on the bench in an inning, all 10 players must be in the batting order all game. The

batting order may not be changed during the game except for injury. If a player is injured, he is removed from the line-up at no penalty. That player may re-enter the game if he feels better, and at the coach's discretion, and be re-inserted into his same spot in the batting order. **A player that arrives after the first pitch must be added to the last spot in the lineup.**

10. **Batting Limitation.** A team is limited to batting through the batting order **once per inning**. No team may send a player to the plate more than once in an inning, even if three outs have not been made. A team may bat entirely through the order to the last batter of the inning in the event that three outs do not occur sooner (and subject to the five-run limitation in Rule 11 below). This rule applies whether or not the teams have an equal number of players. For example, this season if the Astros have 8 players in attendance, and therefore in the batting line-up, and the Padres have 10 players, the last batter for the Astros will be the 8th batter in the inning and the last batter for the Padres will be the 10<sup>th</sup> batter in the inning unless three outs are made (or five runs scored) before the last batter. **This means when the Astros, with 8 players, bat in the top of the 6<sup>th</sup> inning the maximum number of runs they can score is 8 (no outs recorded by the Padres and the last Astros batter hits a home run).** While the Padres can score a maximum of 10 runs due to them having 10 players available (again, no outs recorded by the Astros and the final Padre batter hits a home run).
  - a. With the last batter, the play ends when any of the conditions in Rule 12 occurs. If play is stopped as a result of the pitcher/umpire having possession of the ball or being thrown a catchable ball (i.e., the play ends under Rule 12(d) or (e)), then a runner who has advanced at least halfway to home at the time the pitcher gains possession will score (unless five runs have already scored that inning).
  - b. The head coach of the team at bat **must notify the pitcher/umpire**, who will then announce, that the current batter is the last batter of the inning. If the head coach of the team at bat fails to be recognized by the pitcher/umpire for last batter status, one of two things will occur. If the batter makes an out, the play stands and the inning is over. In that case, no runs may score, regardless of a baseball play happening where a run would normally score (example, if the runner crosses home plate before the third out is made on a non-force play.) If the batter gets a hit of any kind, the ball is immediately dead, the inning is over and he is credited only with a single. The only run that may score in on this play is if the bases are loaded the runner on third is awarded home. In

other words, even if the undeclared last batter hits a grand slam, only one run will count.

11. **Five Run Rule.** No team may score more than five runs in an inning except the 6<sup>th</sup> inning (and in extra innings during the playoffs). This does not apply to the ‘last inning played’ in the event the 90-minute game limit will prevent a 6<sup>th</sup> inning from being played (*i.e.*, in innings 1-5 there is always a five-run limit even if that inning turns out to be the final one played). When a team scores its fifth run in an inning, the inning is immediately over (even if more runs would have scored on a play, only the first five runs will count each inning). However, the five-run rule does not apply in the 6<sup>th</sup> inning (all other innings have the five-run limit with no exceptions). In the 6<sup>th</sup> inning, teams may score as many runs as they have batters, or until the third out is recorded.
  
12. **Play Ends.** Every play ends when:
  - a. a third out is made
  - b. no further play is possible
  - c. any defensive player has secure possession of the ball and is standing on home plate
  - d. the umpire “pitcher” has possession of the ball near the pitching mound
  - e. even if the umpire “pitcher” does not catch the ball thrown to him, the play ends when the fielding team throws the ball to the pitcher to stop the play if the umpire at pitcher position determines that it was a catchable ball. The umpire “pitcher” will make every reasonable effort to field a throw to them from the fielding team. If for any reason the pitcher is distracted when the ball is thrown to them the play is dead if the umpire determines the throw was catchable (for example, it hits the pitcher’s glove or the throw crosses the plane of the pitcher’s mound). In other words, the ability or inability of the pitcher to make a catch will have no bearing on the game.
    - i. If the throw is intended for the pitcher and is offline but still deemed catchable (as determined in the judgment of the umpire “pitcher”), then the play is still dead when it crosses the area of the mound.
    - ii. If the throw is intended for the pitcher and is not catchable (as determined in the judgment of the umpire), then the overthrow rule applies as long as it’s the first overthrow of the play and the batted ball has remained in the infield. (See section 17 below.)

- iii. If the throw is intended for another fielder as determined in the judgment of the umpire, and no previous overthrows have been made on an infield play, the ball remains live and each player can advance another base.

When play is stopped as a result of the pitcher/umpire having possession of the ball then any runner who has advanced past halfway to the next base will be awarded the base including home plate (unless five runs have already scored at that point in the inning). If any runner is less than halfway to the next base when the play ends, then that runner shall return to the base from which the runner started.

13. **Number of Defensive Players.** A maximum of 10 players may be used defensively at a time, based on our belief that it is better to have the players out in the field rather than on the bench. A team that plays 10 players will have a catcher. If a team has more than 10 players then every effort should be made to allow all players equal fielding time. No player should sit more than one inning.
14. **Infield Positions.** The fielding team may use a maximum of **6 infielders** (catcher, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, and a ‘rover’ positioned between SS and 2B, in front of the actual second base). No fielder may play at the pitcher’s mound, (this is a safety issue given the location of the pitching machine). Teams are **strongly encouraged** to develop catchers in RM. However, for the catcher to be counted as an infielder they must be stationed behind home plate and attempt to catch every pitch from the pitching machine. If the catcher is in full gear standing off to the side of home plate, standing by the backstop, or too far behind the plate to have a legitimate chance at catching the pitched ball they **do not count** as an infielder. If this occurs the pitcher/umpire or the opposing coach may alert the coach of the team on defense. Due to the defensive restrictions caused by the use of the pitching machine, no bunts are allowed. All players must play a **minimum of two** innings in the infield per game **for all games, including the playoffs.** Any team not in compliance of the two innings of infield play per player will forfeit the game, playoffs included.
15. **Outfield Positions.** The team in the field may use up to **4 outfielders**. All outfielders **must be positioned on/near the outfield grass at the time the ball is hit and outfielders cannot be used to cover a base (i.e., they can only cover overthrows of a base).** If an outfielder covers a base the umpire will rule the runner safe on a force play. The umpires will enforce positioning of outfielders, and alert the coach to move them back, if they deem them being too close to the infield.

16. **Base Running.** There are no lead-offs or base stealing; runners may not advance or leave the base until the batter makes contact. If a runner leaves the base early they can be ruled out by the umpire. Runners may slide (feet first only!), and are encouraged/required to do so when a defensive player is in position to make an out at the approaching base, (other than at first base, of course). Runners cannot ‘charge’ the catcher at the plate under any circumstances. If the runner runs into the catcher without sliding, the runner will be automatically called out. To help speed up the game, if there are two outs and your catcher is on base, you may pinch run for him to start the process of putting on the catching gear for the next inning.
17. **Overthrows.** There is only one ‘overthrow’ per batted ball that’s put into play in the infield, there are no multiple overthrows on the same infield play aka the Little League Home Run. The one overthrow can occur on a throw to any base by an infielder and also includes a throw to the pitcher/umpire that is not deemed catchable. Once a batted ball gets past the infield area and infielders turn their back to home plate to get the ball, or the outfielders field the ball the one overthrow rule no longer applies and play can only be stopped as explained in rule 12 (Play Ends). If an infielder makes an overthrow to first base that goes out of play (past the imaginary line from the front of the first base dugout down the right field line) it will result in a dead ball and players advance no more than one base past the initial base they were running to at the start of the play (example, the batter goes to 2<sup>nd</sup>, runner on 1<sup>st</sup> goes to 3<sup>rd</sup>, runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> scores. This is defined as “one base”). The same goes for an overthrow to third base (past the imaginary line from the front of the third base dugout down the left field line). However, if an overthrow does not go out of play the runner advances at their own risk to the next base but that is as far as they can go on the overthrow even if the first baseman (or another player) over throws the next base. At the point of the second overthrow on the play the ball is dead, the play is over and all other runners are also limited to one base as stated above in the example. The one overthrow rule is to encourage infielders to make a defensive play and attempt to get the runner out as there will be no further penalty for an errant throw or inability to make a catch and tag.
18. **Players/Coaches on the Field of Play.** Coaches are not allowed on the field of play. When on offense the only players on the field of play are the batter and any base runners. All other batters should be in the dugout area without a bat in hand. No dugouts are to be used during the 2021 season. The only batter holding a bat is the one at home plate. There is no on-deck circle, there are no

hitting stations allowed during the game. All batting equipment must be in the dugout area.

a. Offensive Coaches allowed outside the dugout area:

- i. 1st base coach
- ii. 3rd base coach

b. Defensive Coaches allowed outside the dugout area:

- i Coach behind the plate at the backstop to field balls that get past the catcher during the game (to speed up play)
- ii Coach near dugout to verbally assist players with positioning

Coaches may not stop overthrown balls at any base or otherwise interfere with a live play. Other than the umpires, no other non-players are allowed on the field of play. It is the head coach's responsibility to make sure that no parents are on the field.

The offensive team needs to have an adult managing the batting lineup and behavior of the kids in the dugout area. This coach should also get the catcher ready for the next inning. This will speed play and improve safety.

**19. Umpires.** We use youth umpires for most TPLL games. Coaches should introduce themselves at a pre-game meeting at home plate 10 minutes before first pitch and get to know the umpires by first name. Umpires are instructed to do the same, but some kids may be intimidated. **At all times, it is essential that coaches, assistant coaches and parents refrain from any and all criticism of the umpires.** The umpires are working their first job and learning as well. They will make bad calls or misinterpret rules occasionally, though overall they do an excellent job. If you believe there has been an error in enforcing a rule correctly (but not on an issue of judgment, such as whether a runner was safe or out), you may approach the umpire, ask the other head coach to join the meeting and have an appropriately toned discussion. Have familiarity and a copy of these rules on hand. Again, at no time may a coach, player or parent challenge a judgment call. Head coaches are responsible for managing their team's parents. The youth umpires will be treated with our very best behavior and respect.

**20. Score Keeping.** Each team needs to designate a parent to keep score using Game Changer. Game Changer is the official score of the game. If there is a discrepancy in score of any kind, Game Changer has the final say. The Game Changer scorekeepers from each team are expected to confer the score at the end of every half inning.

21. **Game Time Limit.** Games are 90 minutes or 6 innings, whichever is shorter. The official start time of the games are 10 a.m., 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. A new inning **begins as soon as the 3<sup>rd</sup> out is recorded** at the end of the prior inning. A new inning MUST be started if 90 minutes have not expired, even if 89 minutes have passed and the inning cannot be completed within the 90-minute limit. Once an inning is started, it will be played to completion, regardless of time, unless the home team is ahead after the visitor has completed batting in the top half of the inning and time has expired. There are no extra innings played during the regular season, only in the playoffs. After 6 innings regular season games end in a tie.
22. **Playoffs.** Each of the 5 RM teams make the playoffs and will participate in a single elimination tournament. The playoff schedule is:
- a **Playoff Game #1:** Tuesday, June 8, 2021 @ 5 p.m.
    - i #5 seed @ #4 seed
  - b **Playoff Game #2:** Wednesday, June 9, 2021 @ 5 p.m.
    - i #3 seed @ #2 seed
  - c **Playoff Game #3:** Thursday, June 10, 2021 @ 5 p.m.
    - i Game #1 winner @ #1 seed
  - d **Championship-Super Saturday:** June 12, 2021 @ 10 a.m.
    - i Game #2 winner vs. Game #3 winner, higher seed is the home team.
23. **Playoff Seedings.** Standings will be kept during the eight-game regular season. Seeding for the playoffs will be based on those standings. In the event of a tie in the standings the following will be used to seed teams for the playoffs:
- a Head-to-head record
  - b Record vs. highest ranked opponent in the standings and continuing on down the standings until the tie is broken
  - c If the tie cannot be broken using the standings: Zoom call with the head coaches and a best of three match: Rock, paper, scissors (no dynamite)
24. **Playoff Practice Schedules.** Each of the five RM teams will be allotted one practice slot, 90 minutes, at Granada before their playoff game. Starting Sunday, June 6 all practice times are controlled by Rookie Minors Commissioner, Rich Cellini, Player Agent Pete Nelson and TPLL President Kevin Kissling.

25. **Playoff Games.** All playoff games will go to six innings or until a winner is determined (extra innings if necessary). There is no 90-minute time limit during the playoffs. Starting with the 6<sup>th</sup> inning and continuing until the conclusion of the game, the 5-run rule is no longer in effect. If a playoff game cannot be completed, due to darkness or weather, 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>), the game will NOT revert back to the last complete inning.
26. **Outside Coaches.** Coaches are allowed to secure supplemental outside coaching for their respective team. The standard is a “reasonable amount” of supplemental coaching
27. **Game Results.** Coaches are required to input final scores and complete umpire evaluations on a Google Doc following each game.
28. **Issues.** Any issues that arise during the season will be addressed by Rookie Minors Commissioner, Rich Cellini, Player Agent, Pete Nelson and TPLL President, Kevin Kissling.