



## TPLL 2024 MINORS RULES

This memo provides you with information concerning some of the rules we will be following in the minors 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.

**Home Team and Field Set-Up.** The home team is responsible for setting up the field (pitching machine, 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 the pitching machine and prep the field. This takes about 15 minutes and leaves plenty of time to warm-up your team.

**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 collective ability to maintain them in nice order.

**Dugouts.** The home team gets the 1st base dugout. The home team also supplies the game balls.

### **9 Fielders.**

Minors is an instructional league, and we believe the first level to learn ‘real baseball’. As a result, in Minors this year, we will use 9 true field positions. This will result in playing with three outfielders, playing left field, center field and right field. They must be positioned in the outfield grass—no “short-fielders” or infielders disguised as outfielders are allowed. Please station all outfielders at least 10-feet behind the infield dirt—this league is for kids, and it is humiliating for our younger or inexperienced hitters to see the outfielders with their toes on the infield dirt.

## **2 Hour Game Time Limit and How it Works.**

Minors 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 minors 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).

## **Batting the Full Line-up and Last Batter Rule and 5 Run Rule.**

All teams must allow their entire roster to bat, rather than limiting the eligible batters to the nine position players. Your team may 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 (a local rule we have had for years). Regarding the last batter, please keep the following in mind:

- 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 which has 11 players present can send 11 batters to the plate in any one inning, while a team with only 10 players can only send 10.
- With the last batter, the play ends when (a) a third out is made, (b) when no further play is possible, or (c) when a defensive player has secure possession of the ball and is standing on home plate. When any of these occur, play is dead.
- The manager of the team at bat must notify the opponent that the current batter is the last batter of the inning.
- 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 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.)

- The defensive team may not walk the last batter intentionally; doing so is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. If, in the judgment 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 judgment, was an intentionally thrown ball.

### **5-Run Rule.**

Under National Little League rules applicable to minors, 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 6th inning, more than five runs may be scored (although the last batter rule still applies). Please note that this is a 6th inning rule, not a “last” inning rule. If, by virtue of the 2-hour time limit, the last inning is the 5th (or earlier) inning, the five run limit continues to apply.

### **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 four 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.

### **Progressive Stealing Rules.**

There are two special stealing rules that will not be in effect for all games, yet will be implemented as the season progresses. 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 and encourage catchers to throw to bases to try and get people stealing rather than hold the ball). Accordingly:

#### ***No Stealing Home Rule***

During the first game of the season (if an odd number of teams exist in the league this could result in a team that plays two games without the stealing of home allowed), no player will be allowed to steal home plate under any circumstances. Put simply, a player can score only on:

- a bases-loaded walk,
- a continuous play resulting from a batted ball.

After each team has played one game without the stealing of home allowed, this rule will no longer be in effect and runners will be able to steal home in accordance with all other little league and TPLL rules.

### **One Stolen Base At A Time Rule**

During the first half of the season, no player stealing a base may advance past the one being stolen. All steals will be one base at a time. For example, if a player is stealing second or third and the catcher makes a wild throw into the outfield, the runner must stay at second base and may not advance further. In the event there are runners on first and third, and the player on first attempts to steal second, the runner on third may advance home (as long as the team has played it's first game and the stealing of home is allowed) on the catcher's throw to second base as this action would be completed in line with the one stolen base rule.

### **Pitching –Catching Restrictions.**

No intentional walks are allowed. It is up to the umpire's discretion whether or not the pitcher is intentionally throwing strikes.

You need to be intimately familiar with Regulation VI in the Rule Book regarding pitchers and catchers. There are limits on the number of pitches a player can throw, and mandatory days of rest needed depending on the pitch count. Here is the maximum number that can be thrown based on a player's league age:

League Age	Max Pitches Per Day
11 - 12	85
9-10	75
8	50

If a pitcher reaches these maximums while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until the batter 1) reaches base 2) is put out, 3) the third out is made to complete the half inning, then the pitcher would need to be removed. The days of rest guidelines are as follows:

Number of Pitches in a Day	Mandatory Days of Rest
≥66	4
51-65	3
36-50	2
1-20	0

If a pitcher reaches these rest thresholds while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until the batter 1) reaches base 2) is put out, 3) the third out is made to complete the half inning, then the pitcher would be removed and is only required to observe calendar days of rest for the threshold he reached during the at bat.

By way of example, if player A throws 36 pitches on Thursday, he will not be able to pitch on Saturday, since he needs two days of rest before pitching again (rest days of Friday and Saturday).

In addition, there are restrictions applicable to pitcher-catchers. A pitcher who delivers 41 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 appears as a catcher in a fourth inning), he 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.

**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.

### **Other Rules You Should Know**

- a. Warm up pitches should be kept to a maximum of 5.
- b. Play ends when a defensive player secures the ball and is standing on the mound. This is to ensure we don't have a player on third base dancing around trying to lure a throw from the mound to third so they can steel home.
- c. 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.
- d. 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).
- e. 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.

- f. 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.
- g. 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.
- h. 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.
- i. 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.

**Pool Player Rules.**

- a. Teams can request pool players only if they have 8 or less players for the game
- b. Pool player requests should be made 24 hours in advance to the Player Agent
- c. Pool players are not allowed to pitch, catch or play first base or shortstop
- d. Pool player must bat last
- e. Pool player are not permitted in the playoffs
  - If a Minors team can only field 8 or less players for a playoff game due to injury, the Player Agent can look to bring up a AA player to play for the Minors team. This is only available if the team is short players due to injury.

**Scorekeeping.** Each team needs to designate a scorekeeper to keep track of the runs scored for each team. The scorekeepers should confer at the end of every half inning or sooner if one believes the 5-run rule has been met.

**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 the 5th inning, two outs, runner on 2nd), and will NOT revert back to the last complete inning.

**Game Results.** Both coaches should email game results and pitch counts by player to the Commissioner, Garrett Harden at [garrett.harden@gmail.com](mailto:garrett.harden@gmail.com) as soon as you are able following the games.

**10 Run Mercy Rule.** If a team is winning by 10 or more runs after 4 official innings (or after 3 and a half innings if the home team is up 10 or more runs), then the game is over and the score is final. The coaches may opt to continue the game to let the boys continue to play but the umpires may leave the field, statistics will no longer be kept and the final score will reflect the score at the time the Mercy Rule was implemented.

**Questions or issues.** Email Garrett Harden at [garrett.harden@gmail.com](mailto:garrett.harden@gmail.com)