

Things You Might Have Missed While Studying The Little League Rule Book

- Rule 1.01** Except in T-Ball, nine (9) players are needed to play the game. Do NOT even try to start or continue a game with less than nine players. **New in 2007, a Minor A or AA game can be played with fewer than nine players as well.**
- Rule 1.05** The back point of home plate is set at the intersection of the first and third base foul lines. As such, ALL of home plate is in fair territory.
- Rule 1.08** **Note 1** - No on-deck circle in the sixty-foot diamond baseball programs, and in the softball programs below the Junior level. In fact, in some circles (i.e. Umpire's Judgment) this has been interpreted as meaning that a player should not even have a bat in his/her hand until it is time for that player to approach the plate for his/her turn at bat.
Note 2 - Only the first batter of each half-inning is allowed outside the dugout with a bat in between innings.
- Rule 1.10** In the sixty-foot diamond programs, the maximum bat diameter is 2 1/4 inches. In the baseball Junior program, the bat can be 2 3/4 inches in diameter. In the baseball Senior/Big League program, wood bats can have up to a 2 3/4 inch diameter, but non-wood bats cannot exceed 2 5/8 inches.
Note 1 - No batting donuts. Not even in the dugout area. Just leave them home, please.
Note 3 - Beginning in 2009, non-wood bats used in the sixty-foot programs shall be imprinted with a BPF of 1.15 or less.
- Rule 1.11(a)(3)** Any part of the pitcher's undershirt or T-Shirt exposed to view shall be of a uniform solid color, NOT white or gray.
- Rule 1.11(h)** Sixty-foot diamond programs - No metal cleats.
- Rule 1.11(j)** No jewelry (includes beads), except for medical bracelets.
- Rule 1.15(b)** Pitcher may wear a batting glove on the non-throwing hand as long as the glove isn't white, gray, or optic yellow.
- Rule 1.17** Catchers must wear a mask WITH A "DANGLING" THROAT GUARD and catcher's helmet during infield/outfield practice, pitcher warm-up, and games. Male players in the sixty-foot diamond programs must use the LONG model chest protector with the flap. Please don't risk a game ejection by trying to sneak a short model protector into the game. Female players and players in the ninety-foot programs are the ones who may use the short model chest protector.
- Also, helmets may not be painted or have stickers or tape applied unless the team manager has a letter from the helmet manufacturer or authorized dealer certifying that the paint and/or stickers/tape do not weaken the original strength of the helmet.

Rule 2.00**Definitions**

Obstruction is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. This includes, but is not limited to, the first baseman who is standing in the way of the runner rounding first and trying to head to second, the shortstop who is standing on second with his/her hand on the glove as if to make a tag, but the ball is elsewhere, and of course the catcher or any other defensive player blocking a base without the ball. The key phrase is “while not in possession of the ball.” If a player has the ball in his/her hand, he/she owns the basepath; but if he/she doesn’t have the ball, the player had better make way for the runner.

Strike (e) – one of the points of confusion that happens every year is that folks do not understand that a player can be hit by the ball, and the umpire can call the pitch a strike. This would be the case if the batter was swinging at the pitch and got hit; or the batter was leaning too far over the plate and was hit by a pitch that was in the legal strike zone. The ball is dead when it hits the batter, but the strike counts.

PLAY is the umpire’s order to start the game or to resume action following any dead ball. Just remind your players that, if the umpire is holding his/her hand up as a STOP signal, they need to wait until the umpire says PLAY.

A **QUICK RETURN** is a pitch made with obvious intent to catch a batter off balance. Yes, we know that once the batter has both feet inside the batter’s box, the pitcher supposedly can deliver the ball. However, the interpretation here is that the pitcher needs to wait until the batter has had the opportunity, in the umpire’s judgment, to be ready to swing.

TIME is the announcement by an umpire of a LEGAL interruption of play. Time may NOT be called while the ball is live (although the umpire does have the right to stop play any time at his/her discretion in the event of an injury). Most notably, a manager/coach might want to call TIME, but gets no response from the umpire. This normally is the case when a runner is still in jeopardy, being off the base; and in such a case the umpire will usually be silent watching for a play. Also, if a batter takes “Ball Four” and gets the walk to first base, the ball is still live and in play until that player reaches that base. In this situation, a typical request might be “Time when he/she gets there please.” Please wait until TIME has been granted to trek out onto the field. We don’t want managers/coaches embarrassed by having to be sent back into the dugout.

A **FOUL BALL** is a batted ball that settles **completely** (no part of the ball touching any part of the line) on foul territory between home and first base or between home and third base, or that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory, or that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base, or that while on or over foul territory, touches the person of an umpire, or coach, or player, or any object foreign to the natural ground.

Rule 3.01(e) Before the game begins, the umpires shall have possession of the game ball and at least two (2) additional balls and shall require replenishment of such supply of alternate balls as needed throughout the game.

Rule 3.17 Players and substitutes shall sit on the team’s bench or in the dugout unless participating in the game or preparing to enter the game. No one except eligible players in uniform, **a manager and not more than two (2) coaches** shall occupy the bench or dugout.

Rule 4.05(2) Base coaches can be an adult manager or coach only if there is at least one (1) other adult manager or coach in the dugout.

Rule 4.10(d) If a game is called before it has become a regulation game, but after one (1) or more innings have been played, it shall be resumed exactly where it left off.

Rule 4.16 If a game cannot be played because of the inability of either team to place nine (9) players on the field before the game begins, this shall not be grounds for an automatic forfeit, but shall be referred to the Board of Directors for a decision. **Note:** This applies to AAA Minor, Majors, Juniors and Seniors, where a game may not be started, with less than nine (9) players on each team; and as noted in **Rule 4.17**, it cannot continue with fewer than nine (9) players. In AA and lower, a team can play with less than nine (9) players

Rule 4.19 Protests shall be considered only when based on the violation or interpretation of a playing rule, use of an ineligible pitcher, or use of an ineligible player. No protest shall be considered on a decision involving an umpire's judgment call.

Rule 5.10(h) Except for darkness or to deal with an incapacitated player or umpire, no umpire shall call "TIME" while a play is in progress; ... and this includes the time it takes for a batter who has "walked" to reach first base.

Rule 6.02(a) The batter shall take his/her position in the batter's box promptly. At this time, the pitcher can legally pitch the ball. A batter holding his/her hand in the air, or digging a foothold in the box, is legally within the box, and as long as the pitcher isn't "quick pitching", the batter may be in for a surprise. If a batter wants "Time" to be called, the batter should ask for "Time", not just hold his/her hand up.

Rule 6.08©) This rule identifies the only case of defensive interference, in which the catcher or any fielder interferes with the batter. Generally, this is the call when the catcher is creeping closer and closer to the plate, and holding the glove out just a little more trying to gain those extra inches if a base runner should decide to steal; and the glove is hit as the batter swings. This can become a delayed interference call, as if the player hits the ball, the manager of the offense has the option of taking the play or the interference call.

Rule 7.06 **Obstruction** - If the defensive player doesn't have the ball in his/her possession, the defensive player cannot block the advancement of a runner. Base awards, if any, are given by the umpire based upon his/her judgment as to how far the obstructed runner would have gotten were it not for the obstruction.

As noted in the definition section, there are a multitude of ways in which the defense can be guilty of obstruction. Basically, if the progress of a runner is impeded by a defensive player who DOES NOT HAVE THE BALL, then the defense is guilty of obstruction.

Rule 7.08(a)(3) Any runner is out when the runner *does not slide* **OR** make an *attempt to get around* the fielder **who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag**. Some umpires are very strict regarding the "must slide", while others seriously look at the "attempt to get around" as well. Again, this call is based on an umpire's judgment.

Also, we need to remember that the baseline is determined by where the runner is, verses where the runner is headed, **at the time the defense starts to make a play on said runner**. Once the parts are established, then the "three feet to either side" kicks in. For example, a runner taking a wide turn at first into the outfield grass and heading toward second is NOT out of the baseline. The runner establishes his/her own baseline, until the defense gets actively involved. It's at the point where, **with the ball**, the defense begins to challenge the runner that the straight line from where the runner is, to where the runner is trying to go, plus/minus three feet, takes effect.

- Rule 7.09** In addition to the “bat hit the ball a second time in fair territory” type of interference, **Offensive Interference** occurs when an offensive player obstructs, collides with or impedes a fielder legitimately trying to make a play. If the action is violent enough to be considered malicious, ejection might be warranted in addition to the interference call.
- Rule 7.13** In the sixty-foot diamond baseball programs, and Minor/Major Softball, when a pitcher is on the mound and the catcher is in the box with the helmet on ready to receive a pitch, the base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball passes the batter (Junior/Senior/Big League Softball - until the pitcher releases the ball). The runner leaving early foul is a call that the umpire makes if he/she is in position to see it. It is not subject to appeal.
- Rule 7.14** Special Pinch Runner rule is NOT in effect in the Coles sixty-foot baseball programs due to the use of the continuous batting order as outlined in Rule 4.04.
- Rule 8.03** When a pitcher takes the position at the beginning of each inning, that pitcher shall be permitted to pitch not to exceed eight (8) preparatory pitches to the catcher, or other teammate acting in the capacity of catcher (Note: The rule allows the catcher, or a teammate (with a catcher’s helmet of course) to warm up the pitcher, **NOT an adult**). Such preparatory pitches shall not consume more than one minute of time (with the clock technically starting when the third out is made in the last half-inning).
- Rule 8.04 [Softball 8.03(c)]** **Intentional Walk** - Before a ball is delivered to the batter, the catcher must inform the umpire-in-chief that the defensive team wishes to give the batter an intentional base-on-balls. The umpire waves the batter to first base. The ball is dead, and no pitches are charged against the pitch count.
- Rule 8.05** **Illegal Pitch/Balk in the Ninety Foot Baseball program**
 There’s almost two pages in the book dealing with the Illegal Pitch/Balk and what to do about it. Please review those pages. In the sixty foot program, the primary illegal pitches encountered are the situation where the pitcher begins the delivery and then just stops, and the infamous QUICK PITCH. The call is an illegal pitch and the penalty is that the pitch is called a BALL.

 One caution regarding the illegal pitch call is that, if an illegal pitch should be called, yet the pitcher delivers the ball and the batter hits the ball, the manager of the offensive team has the option of taking the results of the play or the illegal pitch call
- Rule 8.06** **(a)** A manager/coach may come out twice in one inning to visit with the pitcher, but third visit in the same inning requires the pitcher to be removed as pitcher.
(b) A manager/coach may visit with a pitcher three times in one game, but on the fourth visit the pitcher must be removed as a pitcher.
(c) A manager/coach is prohibited from making a third visit while the same batter is at bat.
(d) A manager/coach may confer with **any other player**, including the catcher, during the visit with the pitcher. Formerly, catchers were assumed to be invited to the conference, but now a manager/coach can leave the catcher at the plate and invite any other fielder (singular) to the conference.
- Rule 9.01©)** Each umpire has the authority to rule on any point not specifically covered in these rules.
- Rule 9.02(a)** No player, manager, coach, or substitute shall object to an umpire’s judgment decisions.

REGULATION VI

- (a) Any player on a team may pitch, except that league age twelve year olds cannot pitch in the Minor League. There no longer is a limit as to the number of pitchers a team may use in a game. Additionally, the "three twelve year old pitchers" is a calendar week restriction is removed
- (b) **Junior/Senior/Big League Baseball** - A pitcher, remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game, but only once per game.
- (b) **Major Softball** - If a player pitches in more than one (1) inning, one calendar day of rest is mandatory. A player may pitch in a maximum of nine (9) innings in a game. A player may pitch in a maximum of eighteen (18) innings in a calendar week, Sunday through Saturday. **DELIVERY OF A SINGLE PITCH CONSTITUTES HAVING PITCHED A COMPLETE INNING.**
- (b) **Minor Softball** - If a player pitches in more than one (1) inning, one calendar day of rest is mandatory. . A player may pitch in a maximum of six (6) innings in a game. A player may pitch in a maximum of six (6) innings in a calendar week, Sunday through Saturday. **DELIVERY OF A SINGLE PITCH CONSTITUTES HAVING PITCHED A COMPLETE INNING.**
- (c) **Baseball** - The manager must remove the pitcher when said pitcher reaches the limit for his/her age group, as noted below, but the pitcher may remain in the game at another position:
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| League Age: | 17-18 | 105 pitches per day |
| | 13-16 | 95 pitches per day |
| | 11-12 | 85 pitches per day |
| | 10-under | 75 pitches per day |
- Exception:** If a pitcher reaches the limit imposed in Regulation VI(c) for his/her league age while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until that batter reaches base or is put out.
- (c) **Softball** - A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game, but only once in the same inning as he/she was removed.
- (d) **Baseball** - Pitchers league age 16 and under must adhere to the following rest requirements:
61 or more pitches in a day - three (3) calendar days rest
41-60 pitches - two (2) calendar days rest
21-40 pitches - one (1) calendar day rest
1-20 pitches - zero days rest - can pitch the next day.
- (d) **Major/Junior/Senior Softball** - Not more than five (5) pitchers per team shall be used in one game.
- (e) **Major/Junior/Senior Baseball** - Not more than five (5) pitchers per team shall be used in one game.
- (j) **Baseball** - A player may **NOT** pitch in more than one game in a day (Exception: Big League Baseball)