



## BHLL Minors Local Rules 2026 – Spring Season

### Overview

All managers should be familiar with the Little League, Inc. Official Rules of Play (rule books are available for download via Apple/Android. App is called LL Rulebooks). These are the basic rules of National Little League Baseball and govern all play unless expressly modified by these Official Local Rules.

The listed rules below are for emphasis, or they are local BHLL rules which are approved by Little League International.

### Local Rules for BHLL Minors

1. Prior to game: The managers of both teams shall agree on the fitness of the playing field. If the managers cannot agree, the umpire will decide. Once the game starts, the umpire decides if the field is playable. Err on the conservative side for the safety of the kids. Coaches and umpires are to convene before the game to discuss any specifics of the game to be played.

2. The Home Team (sits on the 1<sup>st</sup> base side) is responsible for setting up the playing field and, for the Minors Division; the Visiting Team (sits on 3<sup>rd</sup> base side) puts the equipment away and is responsible for making sure the equipment boxes are locked. Please make sure to leave the base part that latches into the ground is not removed. Visiting team should have the infield to warm up approximately 20mins before the game for roughly 10mins. Home team should have the infield from 10mins before the game starts until 2mins before game starts.

3. Every rostered player present at the start of a game will participate in each game for a minimum of six (6) defensive outs or half the game (all players in attendance will bat). Each player must play at least three outs (1/2 an inning) in the infield. Any exception to this rule must be approved by the league director. For teams with 12/13 players, it does get tough but please do your best to get your lower kids playing defensively for at least half the game (even if you rotate between the bottom 5/6 kids). All players bat in a continuous order.

4. Game Time I – Games shall last approximately 2 hours. No inning shall start after 1 hour & 45 minutes after first pitch. Coaches are encouraged to clarify the 1:45 time at start of game. A new inning “starts” the moment the last out is recorded in the bottom of the prior inning. Coaches are asked to not slow play to reach time limit. Games will end via “drop dead” rule at a 2hr and 10min time limit and score will revert to previously completed inning unless home team is ahead. If that score results in a tie, the game results in a tie.

**Important:** if the time limit is approaching, and it is evident a full inning cannot be completed in the 2 hour time limit, the coaches will get together, along with the umpire, to determine the “final” inning to be played, and unlimited runs (*teams may bat no more batters than the team with the max # of players participating in game; IE, if team 1 has 10 players and team 2 has 12 players, team 1 may bat no more than 12 players*) will be allowed by both teams at that time.

In instances where the “final” inning is determined and the “final” inning is completed under the stated time limit, the umpire will declare the game officially over (no additional innings are to be played). A game shall not go more than 6 full innings. Essentially, no batter will bat twice in an inning other than possibly the last to make equal batters if necessary.

4a. Game Time II – In order for a game to count toward the standings, a minimum of 4 innings (or 3 ½ innings if the home team is winning) must be completed regardless of the time for a game to be considered a full game. If inclement weather is a non-factor and the home team is winning after 3 ½ innings or the game reaches 4 innings before the 1hr 45min mark, both teams will keep playing until the last inning is started prior to reaching the 1hr 45min of the game.

4aa. BHLL Policy is If there is lightning or thunder, play must be suspended for 30 minutes from the last time lightning is seen or thunder is heard. 2 -The 30-minute countdown restarts every time lightning is seen or thunder is heard.

5. Mercy Rule: if after four (4) innings, three and one-half (3 1/2) innings if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of ten (10) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede victory to the opponent. NOTE: If the visiting team has a lead of ten (10) runs or more, the home team must bat in the bottom of the inning. This applies to both the regular season and the playoffs.

6. Report rainouts, incomplete games, or umpire “no shows” immediately to your league director.

7. Home team managers for Minors Baseball must report game results to the director of the league after each game.

## 8. Pitch Count

8a. The pitcher will only be required to observe the calendar day(s) of rest for the threshold he/she reached during that at-bat, provided that pitcher is removed before delivering a pitch to another batter. Calendar day(s) of rest begins 12:01am the day after a pitcher pitches.

- 66 or more pitches in a day = four (4) calendar days of rest
- 51 – 65 pitches in a day = three (3) calendar days of rest
- 36 – 50 pitches in a day = two (2) calendar days of rest
- 21 – 35 pitches in a day = one (1) calendar days of rest
- 1 - 20 pitches in a day = no (0) calendar day of rest is required

Max pitches per day: According to Little League Rules, there is cap on daily pitches thrown.

### League Age

- 11-12 85 Pitches per game maximum
- 9-10 75 pitches per game maximum
- 7-8 50 pitches per game maximum
- Pitcher is allowed to finish facing a batter if maximum is reached during an at-bat
  
- **Exception:** If a pitcher reaches a day(s) of rest threshold while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs;
  - 1. That batter reaches base;
  - 2. That batter is retired;
  - 3. The third out is made to complete the half inning. **The intent of this rule is to protect the players from injuring their arm due to excessive workload.**

c. Coaches must also keep track of players that pitch in other leagues (e.g., Hawks, travel baseball, CYO league) and count them toward their regular league pitch counts

## **9. Pitching Changes**

A pitcher may **not** be taken out and re-entered into a game as pitcher in the same game. Pitchers may only be allowed to re-enter the game as a position player once taken out from the game as pitcher. A pitcher is only considered to be taken out of the ballgame when another pitcher on his/her team throws a single pitch.

## **10. Strike Zone**

10a. The strike zone shall be viewed liberally in favor of the pitcher and to encourage the batter to hit the ball. In order to avoid excessive bases on balls, the strike zone shall be from the batter's arm pit to the bottom of the knees and the width of home plate plus two (2) inches on each side of home plate.

## **11. Base Stealing**

11a. There are no "lead offs" on any bases. The base runners must have one foot on the base when the ball crosses home plate. In the event a runner leaves the base early, a coach may appeal the play to the umpire. It is NOT an automatic out.

11aa. If a baserunner leaves early (before the ball crosses Homeplate) and the ball is NOT put into play and a base stealer is safe, then the umpire will use their discretion in either issuing a warning or sending back the runner to the base he occupied before the pitch.

11ab. If the batter hits the ball in fair play and reaches base safely then, if the runner who left early was not put out on the play, the umpire will use their discretion to determine if the runner needs to return to the base closest to the one he occupied before the pitch or umpire may issue warning.

11b. Sliding is allowed however feet first sliding is only allowed. Headfirst sliding is not allowed.

11c. Base stealing is only allowed from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> base. Stealing of 2<sup>nd</sup> base is strictly prohibited. If a runner successfully steals 3<sup>rd</sup> base, the runner is prohibited from advancing to home on an overthrow of a successful steal.

11d. There is NO straight stealing from 3<sup>rd</sup> base to home under any circumstances other than one passed ball per inning (see 12b).

## **12. Passed Balls from Pitcher**

12a. A Base Runner **MAY NOT ADVANCE** on a passed ball pitch that the catcher is unable to properly stop from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

12b. A Base Runner **MAY ADVANCE** on a passed ball pitch that the catcher is unable to properly stop from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> base (unlimited number of times during an inning) and 3<sup>rd</sup> base to home (maximum of 1 time per inning).

### **13. Coaching Disputes, Poor Behavior, and Ejections (LL Rule 9.05)**

13a. The umpire shall report to the league president within twenty-four hours after the end of a game all violations of rules and other incidents worth of comment, including the disqualification of any manager, coach or player, and the reasons therefore.

13b. When any manager, coach or player is disqualified for a flagrant offense such as the use of obscene or indecent language, or an assault upon an umpire, manager, coach or player, the umpire shall forward full particulars to the league president within twenty-four hours after the end of the game.

13c. After receiving the umpire's report that a manager, coach or player has been disqualified, the league president shall require such manager, coach or player to April 2021 appear before at least three members of the board of directors to explain their conduct. In the case of a player, the manager shall appear with the player in the capacity of an advisor. The members of the Board present at the meetings shall impose such penalty as they feel is justified. NOTE: The Board may impose such penalties that it feels are warranted, but may not lessen the requirements of Rule 4.07.

13d. When a manager, coach or player is ejected from a game, they shall leave the field immediately and take no further part in that game. Ejected person may not sit in the stands and may not be recalled. A manager or coach ejected from a game must not be present at the game site for the remainder of that game. If ejected manager, coach or player refuses to leave, his or team will automatically forfeit the game (Umpire discretion). Any manager, coach or player ejected from a game is suspended for his or her team's next physically played game and may not be in attendance at the game site from which they were suspended. (LL Rule 4.07) April 2021

13e. All participants within the game and spectators are expected to always defer to the umpires of our games and honor their calls. Disputes between fans and umpires will not be tolerated. Our stakeholders in our league are asked to always provide courtesy to our umpires regardless of age group or experience level.

### **14. The side is retired when one of the following occurs (LL Rule 5.07):**

14a. Three offensive players are legally put out

14b. When all players on the roster have batted one time in the half-inning (team with less players on it may bat the same number of batters as the other team with more players has)

14c. or when the offensive team scores five (5) runs

14d. The 5-run max rule per inning is suspended in the last inning for both teams. (LL Rule 5.07 is suspended for the last inning) Continuous batting order rule is still in effect (batters may not bat twice unless their team has fewer batters compared to the other team).

### **15. Batting Through Order Rule**

15a. Should the number of players on competing teams differ in a game, the team with the lower number of players on it may bat around to no more than the number of players of the team with a higher number of players on it. Example, if Team 1 has 12 players and Team 2 has 9 players on it. Team 2 may bat through no more than 12 hitters unless 3 outs occur or 5 runs have been scored in the half inning (unless last inning). Team 1 may bat through no more than 12 hitters using continuous batting order rule.

### **16. Overthrows during Batted Ball in Play**

16a. On an overthrow to any base, the baserunner is allowed unlimited bases. Play ceases when the ball is in the pitcher's possession and he is in a roughly 10ft radius of the mound. Otherwise, the ball is live!

16b. If a ball on an overthrow goes out of play or deemed out of play by the umpire, any base runners are awarded two bases from the time of the throw. If any ball goes past any of the fence lines at Beverly Park North/South Field, the ball is automatically ruled a dead ball.

## **17. Walk Rule**

17a. In a half-inning of play, should a pitcher walk two consecutive batters in a row, a rule will be entered into play should the next batter (following the previous two batters who were issued a walk) reach ball 4...instead of the batter being issued a walk to first base, the hitting team's coach will come out and throw 3 "hittable" pitches. Pitchers are deemed "hittable/unhittable" by Umpire discretion.

aa. The pitcher will maintain position in field of play

ab. The pitch(es) must be thrown overhand (shot-put pitch okay) & coach pitcher must be on the rubber (no closer than within the area of the mound defined by the chalk circle or approx. 6ft in front of rubber max).

ac. The coach must do his best to not interfere with any defensive players making an attempt on a batted ball and shall either do his best to vacate the field immediately while not interfering or remain in place until the play is completely over.

ad. Should the batter not put any of the 3 "hittable" pitches in fair play with any of the 3 coach pitches, the batter is automatically ruled out and base runners may not advance under any circumstances.

ae. The outcome of the 3 "hittable" coach pitches must be either a ball in play or a strikeout.

af. A foul ball does count toward the first 2 hittable pitches. A foul ball cannot end the batters at bat during the coach pitch process just as a foul ball does not end an at bat in MLB.

17-1. Rule 18 Walk Rule should not come into play if the following occurs:

a. A pitcher who walks 2 consecutive batters is taken out of the game and a new pitcher comes in. A new pitcher automatically resets the Walk rule back to zero.

17-2. Should a hit by pitch occur after 1 or 2 consecutive walks by a pitcher in the same half-inning, the hitter will advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base. The consecutive walk count will remain at the current number for the next batter. A hit by pitch does not constitute as a walk and does not result in a reset of the consecutive walk count back to zero. Should 2 consecutive walks occur, then a hit by pitch occur for the 3<sup>rd</sup> batter in sequence, then another walk to the next batter...the batter who drew a walk after the hitter who was hit by pitch, will have to face a coach pitch to finish out the at bat.

17-2. A Hit By Pitch does not trigger the walk rule into affect.

Example: Walk (1), Walk (2), Hit By Pitch, Walk (3)...the last batter to draw a walk will face coach pitch

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## **18. Generic Rules:**

18a. All male players must wear protective athletic supporters (protective cup). Male catchers must wear metal, fiber or plastic type cup, and a long-model chest protector. Female catchers must wear long or short model chest protectors (LL Rule 1.17).

18b. No bunting allowed

18c. No infield fly rule will be in affect. This encourages the defenders to make the defensive play and not rely on a rule to bail them out.

18d. Unlimited defensive substitutions are allowed (excluding Pitcher). Once a pitcher is removed from the game, he/she may not return as Pitcher.

18e. In the minors division the next innings catcher may have a courtesy runner at 2 outs while team is on offense.

18f. Home team is required to supply 2 new baseballs to umpire to start each game.

18g. All baseball bats must have the USA Baseball Logo on it. Any USSSA/BBCOR bats are viewed as being non-compliant for Little League of America standards.

18h. For the safety of the catcher and the umpire, please encourage your players to NOT THROW THE BAT. Umpires will always warn batters about this after an occurrence, but it should NOT be an automatic out.

18i. No player shall sit an additional time before others have sat at least the same amount of time.

18j. Tie Breaker for playoff seeding: 1) Head-to-head results 2) Fewest runs allowed 3) Most runs scored 4) Coin flip

## **19. Schedule recommendations:**

The season shall begin on or around the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of April.

Generally played M/W/F

10-12 game schedule (generally games can be made up on weekends at both coaches discretion, BHLL does not require make up games).

Regular season shall conclude with enough time to hold a playoff tournament that shall end before Birmingham Public Schools last day of school.

The playoff tournament shall include all teams.

If 6 teams, teams 1 and 2 receive a bye. Team 3 plays 6, Team 4 plays 5. Lower seed moves on to play team 1. Other seed plays team 2.

If 5 teams, team 4 and 5 play a "play in" for chance to play 1 seed in semi's. Team 2 plays 3.

The semi-finals and the finals shall be played on a M/W or W/F.

If for weather or other unforeseen circumstances the games cannot be played on such a schedule, the pitch counts do not reset. The pitch counts are to be treated as though there was only one game between the semi final and the final.

If playoffs cannot be finished, the highest remaining seed is to become the Champion.