**Blaine Area Little League**

**2025 Rookies Division**

Blaine Area Little League’s Rookies Division is a transitional division for player development. These rules are designed with the intent of developing the pitching and catching positions as the season progresses, while giving batters the opportunity to hit off live pitching, without the concern of stealing and passed balls, which they will experience at the next level for their age.

The intention of this division is to be a hybrid between Machine Pitch baseball at the start of the season and transition into player pitch baseball for the final 4 games of the season.

Player safety is paramount; please make sure to read, understand, and follow the rules regarding player pitch counts. If you have questions, reach out to the league commissioner.

**\*Any situations not covered by these rules shall be governed by the current year Little League Official Regulations and Playing Rules book.**

Last Update: March 2025

**Rule 1.00 – The Playing Field**

1.01 The distance between the bases is 60-feet.

1.02 The batter’s box is a 3-foot by 6-foot rectangle 6-inches from the right and left of home plate.

1.03 The pitching rubber is 46-feet from home plate.

1.04 The home team is responsible for setting up the pitching machine. Settings should be 3/3/3 at 40- 45ft away from home plate based on pitch quality.

**Rule 2.00 – Umpires & Coaches**

2.01 With use of the machine for pitching, a coach from the defensive team will be the coach pitcher and one will stand in as the home plate umpire.

2.02 With use of the machine for pitching, the coach pitcher is not allowed to coach base runners in any way.

2.03 With use of the machine for pitching, the coach pitcher should not make any motion to receive a ball from a fellow teammate/defensive player until “Dead Ball” has been called by the home plate umpire.

2.04 When pitching is introduced in games for the Rookies Division, the league will provide an Umpire behind home plate calling balls & strikes and fair & foul batted balls, as well as outs at all bases. The Umpire will make the call when there is a Dead Ball.

2.05 All coaches must remain in the dugout when not coaching first or third base. A maximum of four (4) coaches are allowed in the dugout during the game. A coach must always remain on the bench; if only two coaches are available a player, wearing a helmet, is allowed to coach bases.

2.06 The home team head coach will post the final score of the game within 24 hours of the start time of the game. Each team head coach will record their own pitch counts on their team page on the BALL website within 24 hours of the start time of the game.

**Rule 3.00 – Team Size, Play Requirements, Substitutions, and Positions**

3.01 Teams must have at least eight (8) players for an official game to be played. If a team does not have 8 players by five minutes after the scheduled game time, the game will be considered a forfeit and should be recorded as a 7-0 game. In the event of a forfeit, the players will split up evenly and play a scrimmage.

3.02 If it is known that a team will not have enough players, substitutions are allowed. It is up to the team coach(es) to contact the League Player Agent to find players at least 1 day in advance of the game.

3.03 A defensive team shall consist of ten (10) players (if enough players): pitcher, catcher, 1st base, 2nd base, short stop, 3rd base, right field, right center, left center, left field.

3.04 With use of the machine for pitching, the defensive team’s player pitcher will have one foot next to the pitching rubber, if one exists. If there is not a rubber available, they shall play on an imaginary line between 1st/3rd and 2nd/home plate.

1. The player pitcher will line up to the left or right of the coach pitcher.

2. If the batted ball hits the pitching machine or the bucket of balls, it’s considered a dead ball, and the batter gets an additional pitch.

3. The coach pitcher must make every attempt to remove themself from batted ball and defensive play. If, despite all best intentions, the coach pitcher interferes in the play, it is considered a dead ball/no pitch and the play is redone.

3.05 Each player will play at least two (2) innings in the infield per game. All players must sit once before any player sits a second time.

1. When pitching is introduced in games, the starting pitcher and catcher are not included in this requirement until they leave those positions.

**Rule 4.00 – Pitchers**

4.01 Any player on the team may pitch.

4.02 **Pitchers League Age 6 to 8 are limited to a maximum of 50 pitches per day.** The Head Coach must remove the pitcher when said pitcher reaches the limit for pitches, but the pitcher may remain in the game at another position. **Exception**: If a pitcher reaches the pitch count limit while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs:

1. The batter reaches base;

2. The batter is put out;

3. The third out is made to complete the half-inning of the game;

4. The pitcher is removed from the mound prior to the batter completing their at bat.

4.03 Pitchers must adhere to the following rest requirement:

1. If a player pitches 36-50 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.

2. If a player pitches 21-35 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.

3. If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest is required. 4. Under no circumstances shall a player pitch in three (3) consecutive days.

5. Under no circumstances shall a player pitch 2 consecutive games within the same day, regardless of pitch count.

4.04 A player’s pitch count for the purposes of day(s) rest threshold is determined by the first pitch thrown to a batter. The pitchers may not start a new batter once the daily limit has been met.

4.05 Coaches are required to monitor the pitch count of their own team as well as the opposing team. Teams should meet after each half-inning to ensure both teams have the same pitch counts.

4.06 As the Rookies Division does not permit stealing (see Rule 5.03) Little League Regulation VI(a) regarding players who have played the position of catcher and then pitcher is not in effect.

**Rule 5.00 – Playing Rules**

5.01 A batter is out when:

a. A fair or foul fly ball is legally caught by a fielder;

b. A third strike is called by the home plate umpire;

c. The batter attempts to hit a third strike and is touched by the ball;

d. A fair ball touches the batter before touching a fielder;

e. After hitting a fair ball, the batter-runner or first-base is tagged before the batter runner touches first-base.

5.02 A dropped (uncaught) third strike is a Dead Ball.

5.03 Stealing bases is not allowed.

5.04 Leading off is not allowed. The home plate umpire will give one warning per team per game for leading off. Each instance thereafter will be an out for the offensive team. Leaving the base is allowed once the pitch crosses home plate.

5.05 As there is no stealing of bases or leading off, no situation can exist whereby a pitcher may mislead a base runner, therefore there are no balks.

5.06 Passed Balls are Dead Balls. Baserunners cannot advance on Passed Balls. A “Passed Ball” is defined as an uncaught pitch that goes behind the Umpire line.

5.07 Baserunners are awarded one base, including home, on overthrows that go out of play. Umpires and coaches will meet and agree upon “out of play” before the start of the game.

5.08 Each batter is allowed six (6) machine pitches to hit the ball fair. If the player fails to hit the ball into play after six (6) machine pitches, the player is out. If a foul ball is hit on the sixth (6th) pitch, the player is allowed continued pitches until an at bat-outcome (playable hit or final strike/out) is determined.

a. A player cannot strike out on a foul ball, however if a foul ball is caught by the opposing team the player is out.

b. If the player does not swing at subsequent pitches from the sixth (6th), it is considered a strike and the player is out.

c. Coaches are asked to follow this rule at all times, to ensure the game keeps moving in the interest of all participants.

5.09 There are no walks.

5.10 During machine pitch, on a ball that is hit beyond the infield, the runners may advance until an infield player (pitcher, catcher, 1st base, 2nd base, shortstop, 3rd base) has control of the ball.

1. When this is true and no attempt is being made on a base runner, the home plate umpire coach will call “Dead Ball” and at this point.
2. Note: By definition, the infield is in no relation to the size of the dirt infield as dirt infields can be different sizes. This rule is annually the most complicated for teams to understand. When in doubt, use baseball logic to ensure both coaches understand and are clear prior to the start of the game.
3. When an infield player gains control of the ball, if any baserunner has already advanced further than their intended base, the player can opt to return or attempt to continue on to the next base.
   1. When this is true, the player cannot further advance in the event of an overthrow infielder to infielder.

5.11 Player pitchers may only throw fastballs and changeups.

5.12 When player pitch begins, up to four (4) pitches will be allotted and added to the pitcher’s pitch out.

1. If the player pitcher throws four (4) balls, the offensive coach will come in and throw a max of three (3) pitches to the player at-bat. The count will not carry over from the player pitcher regarding strikes. If the ball is not hit into play from the coach’s three (3) pitches, then the batter is out.
   1. If a foul ball is hit on the third (3rd) pitch, the player is allowed continued pitches until an at bat-outcome (playable hit or final strike/out) is determined.

5.13 If there are two (2) outs in an inning and the pitcher and/or catcher of record are on base, the offensive team can elect to use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and/or catcher.

5.14 Continuous batting and free defensive substitutions are allowed. All players must be listed in the batting order. Any player who arrives after the start of the game will be placed last in the batting order.

5.15 A team may score no more than five (5) runs in an inning. Scoring of the 5th run has the same effect as the 3rd out. There is no cumulative run rule; Little League Rule 4.10(e) is not in effect. Teams may score up to 30-runs in a game.

5.16 Games are six (6) innings with no new inning beginning after 1 hour and 45 minutes of play. The visiting and home teams must have an equal number of times at-bat to make it a complete game. Games can end in a tie.

**Rule 6.00 – Equipment and Safety**

6.01 Players are only allowed the use of baseball bats which meet the USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat) as adopted by Little League. Non-wood and laminated bats used shall bear the USA Baseball logo signifying that the bat meets the USABat – USA Baseball’s Youth Bat Performance Standard. If the certification mark/s on a bat are not legible, that bat cannot be used and shall be removed from the game. The bat shall be a smooth, rounded stick, and made of wood or of material and color tested and proved acceptable to the USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat). All BPF – 1.15 bats are prohibited. The bat diameter shall not exceed 2⅝ inches for these divisions of play. Bats meeting the Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) standard may also be used in the Intermediate (50- 70) Division and Junior League Division. Additional information is available at LittleLeague.org/batinfo.

6.02 Non-USA Baseball bats are not allowed in the dugout or on the field of play. A batter is **out** for illegal action if a batter enters the batter’s box with an illegal bat or discovered having used an illegal bat prior to the next player entering the batter’s box. The ball is dead and runners must return if they advanced on the play. For the first violation, the offensive team will lose one adult base coach for the duration of the game. For the second violation, the Head Coach of the team will be **ejected** from the game. Any subsequent violation will result in the newl designated Head Coach being **ejected**. See: Little League Rule 6.06(d)

6.03 Players throwing their bat while batting is not allowed. The Umpire will give the player a warning after the first thrown bat – both head coaches will be notified and must acknowledge notification. On the second thrown bat by the same player, **the offending player is called out** and no base runners are allowed to advance.

6.04 On deck batters are not allowed for safety reasons. No player shall be allowed in front of the dugout/bench fence until it is their turn to bat. All players, except the batter, should be inside the dugout area behind the fence during play when not in the field on defense. One warning will be given and on the second warning, **the offending player will be called out**. While it is the responsibility of all coaches to enforce this rule, ultimately the bench coach should ensure no players exit the dugout area prior to their turn at-bat.

6.05 The catcher shall wear normal catcher’s equipment including a helmet/facemask (hockey style) with a dangling throat protector, chest protector, and shin guards.