



ROOKIE LEAGUE RULES AND REGULATIONS

The pitching machine concept has been added to demonstrate the positive playing effects that will directly affect players at this younger level. Fear of actually being hit by a pitched ball is eliminated and makes the game safer, more fun, and improves playing confidence and ability of all participants.

1. **Game Length:**

- a. Six innings. – three (3) outs per inning or nine batters per inning, which ever comes first .
- b. No inning may start after 1:35 minutes from scheduled game time. The game must end (even if mid inning) at 1:50 from scheduled game time to allow for field turnover. In the event a game is tied, no game should go beyond six innings. The length of games averages one hour and forty minutes.
- c. Score will not be kept.

2. **Field Dimension:** Standard youth base lengths of 60 feet. The pitching machine shall be placed at 46 feet. The pitching machine will be set to throw at 35 mph.

3. **Umpires:** No Umpire will be present at the games. The team at bat will be responsible for assigning a coach to drop balls into the pitching machine and to be the umpire for that half of the inning.

4. **Player Roster:** A suggested 12-13 man roster with all players placed in the batting order. (Game can be played with as few as 7 players.)

5. **Bat and Ball** –A softer ball will be used, harder than a tball. Bat rules have changed as of Jan 1, 2018. However during the 2018 seasons, we are grandfathering the old rules. LSO is strongly encouraging any new bat be purchased based on the new specifications/USA Baseball standard. Bats must adhere to one of the two rule sets (it can not be a combination of the two):

- a. **New (current) ruleset/specifications:** Non wood bats must be stamped with official “USA Baseball” stamp (post production stickers are not allowed). If the stamp has rubbed off, the bat is no longer legal. Bats must NOT be marked “for use in Tball only”. Bat barrels can be 2 5/8 inches in diameter, if “USA Baseball” stamped. Solid wood bats can be used without a USA Baseball stamp (must be solid wood, not laminate or composite wood).
- b. **Old (grandfathered for 2018) ruleset/specifications:** Bats can not be more than 2 ¼ inches in diameter, non-wood bats must have a bpf factor of 1.15 or less.

Playing Rules: Normal youth baseball rules are applied with the exceptions noted herein.

c. **Defense:**

- i. A fourth *outfielder* will be placed on the field defensively.
- ii. Placement of the pitcher
 1. If using a “wheel” type pitching machine, a player is placed on the “non wheel” side of the pitching machine assuming the defensive position of the pitcher. No player may play on the “wheel side” of the machine, or move to the “wheel side” until the ball is hit.
 2. If using a “catapult” type machine, a player may be placed on either side of the machine, assuming the defensive position of the pitcher.
 3. Regardless of a “wheel” or “catapult” type machine, no player may be placed in front of the machine, or move in front of the pitching machine until the ball is hit.
- iii. The catcher takes his normal position. The catcher may choose to use their own glove or a catcher’s mit.
- iv. This now means 10 players have been placed on the field defensively. Pitcher, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Baseman, Shortstop (“Infield Positions”), Catcher (considered “outfield position) and 4 Outfielders.
- v. Outfielders must be placed a minimum of 25 feet behind the bases (this puts them in the outfield grass... outfielders can not play on the “infield dirt”, but can field a ball that gets past the infielders even if it stops on the dirt). Said another way, outfielders must start each at bat with their feet on the grass (the edge of the grass is ok), and may run into field a ball that gets past the infielders. An outfielder is NOT permitted to make an un-assisted putout at any base. (Example: an outfielder is not permitted to field a ground ball and run to a base and tag that base or tag the runner going to that base. If this occurs, the runner will be declared “safe”.) The outfielder must throw to a base or infielder to make an out.
- vi. No player may play more than 2 innings at the same position and no player may play more than 2 consecutive innings at an Infield Position. Catcher is considered an Outfield Position for these purposes.
- vii. A player may sit on the bench for only 1 inning per game except for injury or illness unless a team has 13 or more players present and you play 5 innings. In such case, no player may sit on the bench for more than 2 innings per game (and each player must sit on the bench at least 1 inning).
- viii. Coaches may deviate from the play time rule if excessive absence is a problem. However, these cases must be documented and reviewed with the League Coordinator and Asst. Baseball Commissioner *before* a player is penalized playing time. At this age level it is most important players actively participate every moment and not waste time sitting on the bench and growing bored.

- ix. It is suggested that all players wear a protective cup at all times. Any player who is playing the catcher position will be required to wear one. Any player who is playing the catcher position and is not wearing a protective cup will be removed from the position.

d. **Hitting:**

- i. All players on the roster will be placed in the batting order.
- ii. Each batter receives a maximum of five pitches from the machine (if the 5th pitch from the machine is hit foul, another pitch from machine is allowed... same with a foul on the 6th pitch, etc). If a batter fails to put a ball in play after the five pitches, a coach from the batting team will bring out the tee for the player to use until the batter puts the ball into play. (When hitting off the tee, the batter and runners may only advance to 1st base on a hit.)
- iii. If a batted ball comes into contact with any part of the pitching machine before a defensive player touches the ball, the ball will be considered a dead ball and the batter and runners will be awarded 1st base.

e. **Base Running:**

- i. There will be no lead-offs and no stealing bases in the Rookie League. All base runners must remain on the base until the ball is hit.

ii. **Advancing Base-runners/Time-out**

1. An *infielder* with the ball under control in the *infield* can request “time” from the umpire. Upon such request, the umpire shall immediately grant “time” to the defensive team and the ball will be “dead”. In such case, base-runners will advance according to the following rules:
 - a. If a base-runner is on his way to the next base at the time that the umpire grants “time”, such runner will be awarded the next base (and no more).
 - b. If the base-runner has stopped or hesitated (even if he is off the base) at the time that “time” is granted by the umpire, the base-runner must stay at or return to the base he last touched.
 - c. If the infielder requests “time”, the ball is immediately “dead”. No further put-outs can be made.
2. A player that does not request time can continue to make put-outs on any and all runners. In such case, if the play results in an overthrow, base-runners can continue to advance (one base) at the runner’s risk, until he is put-out.
3. If the ball is under control by an infielder who is no longer attempting to make a put-out and in the umpire’s judgment, base-runners are no longer attempting to advance to the next base, “time” will be automatically granted.
4. **Coaches:** Do NOT send your base-runners to the next base if the ball is already under control in the infield (even if “time” has not been granted). You would be

teaching your kids bad base-running habits that eventually (when the kids get old enough to make consistent throws and can consistently catch the ball) will result in “bad base-running” outs. **COACH YOUR PLAYERS IN A WAY THAT WILL PREPARE THEM TO PLAY AT THE NEXT LEVEL.**