

**WEST SIDE LITTLE LEAGUE (WSLL)**  
**Middle Division Rules**  
**Spring 2008**

These rules accompany and/or modify the Official Playing Rules of Little League Baseball, Inc. In those cases where the West Side Little League Rules contradict the Official Playing Rules of Little League Baseball, Inc., the West Side Little League Rules preempt the Official Rules of Little League Baseball, Inc.

**I. Use of Players**

A. Teams will use a batting order consisting of all players who show up for the game. Prior to each game teams must exchange batting orders with each other and provide a copy to the umpire. The batting order must identify players by name and uniform number.

B. In the Middle Division, all players who are present at the start of the game must play at least three full innings in the field. If for some reason beyond the manager's control (rain, e.g.) a player does not do so, then that player must start the next game. Each team shall provide the other team and the umpire with a six inning schedule of fielding assignments for all players prior to the start of the game.

C. Players who arrive after one full inning of play will be used in the field at the discretion of the manager. Players who arrive after the team has come to bat will be placed at the bottom of the order.

D. In the field, a Middle Division team plays standard infield and outfield positions. The maximum number of players permitted on the field is nine.

E. No Middle Division player may play in the infield for more than four innings per game, including pitchers and catchers.

F. Fielders may be removed from and re-enter a game at any position except pitcher at the start of an inning (and only at the start of an inning).

1. A pitcher who leaves a game may not re-enter as a pitcher even if he/she has not exceeded the allocated four innings.

2. Catcher substitution for base running is required when there are two outs and the catcher is on base. This will enable catchers to put on his/her equipment and speed up the game. The player who made the previous out will run for the catcher.

G. The Division Head will investigate all charges of failure to use players in accordance with these rules upon receiving a complaint from a manager. If the charges are substantiated, the manager who has violated the rules shall be automatically suspended from the team's next game. A second infraction will result the indefinite suspension of the manager and the appointment by the Division Head of a replacement manager.

## **II. Pitching**

### **A. Middle Division Pitching**

- (1) The umpire will call balls and strikes.
- (2) The mound distance shall be 46 feet from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.
- (3) No player shall be permitted to pitch more than four innings in any game. A player is deemed to have pitched an inning if he/she pitches one or more pitches in that inning.
- (4) A pitcher cannot exceed 70 pitches or the limit of 4 innings, whichever comes first. Every team must assign an assistant coach or parent to keep the log of pitches per game. Managers are to strictly enforce this. (5) See Rule I.F.1 above.
- (6) Any pitcher who pitches four innings in a game must rest for three consecutive days before pitching in another game. A player who pitches two or three innings in a game must have one full day of rest before he/she pitches again. A player who pitches in only one inning may pitch the next day. For the purposes of these rules, a player is deemed to have pitched one inning even if he/she only delivered one pitch in that inning.

### **B. Technique**

- (1) Pitchers may use either a windup or set position as defined in the rulebook. In using the set position, the pitcher does not have to come to a complete stop.
- (2) The pitcher must have the pivot foot in contact with the pitching rubber when delivering the pitch. If the pitcher delivers an illegal pitch with the bases unoccupied, the umpire has the discretion to declare it a ball, unless the batter reaches base safely.
- (3) There is no penalty for a balk in the middle division.
- (4) The pitcher may not intentionally try to hit a batter. Umpires have the discretion to remove a pitcher if he/she throws without control and is a danger to the batter. A batter hit by a pitch that first hits the ground shall be awarded first base.
- (5) Intentional walks are prohibited.
- (6) A maximum of eight warm-up pitches will be allowed each pitcher prior to the start of an inning. The umpire may allow a pitcher as much time as is necessary if he/she is entering the game because of an injury to the previous pitcher. Pitchers who enter the game in the middle of an inning otherwise will be permitted eight warm-up pitches to get loose.

(7) The pitcher should pitch within 20 seconds after receiving the ball from the catcher. Umpires have the discretionary authority to direct the pitcher to deliver to the plate if, in their opinion, the time taken between pitches serves to delay the game without cause.

(8) Curveballs thrown with a snapping of the wrist are damaging to a young pitcher's elbow and are not permitted.

### C. Consultations

(1) When the manager consults with the pitcher, only the catcher may join the conference. He/she may not consult with any other player in the field.

(2) Two (2) consultations to the mound with the same pitcher in the same inning shall result in the automatic removal of the pitcher.

## III. Batting

A. Our league utilizes a full roster batting order; that is, all team members who attend the game must be placed in the team batting order. See Section I above.

B. The batter must enter the batter's box promptly when instructed to do so by the umpire. For the purpose of "movement of the game", there shall be no offensive consultation allowed with the batter.

C. If a batter bats out of turn, the proper batter will be declared out upon appeal of the opposition and the next legal batter is at bat. Any play made involving the improper batter is nullified. If the opposition fails to appeal before pitching to the next batter, then any play involving the improper batter stands and no appeal can be made.

D. Bunting is allowed.

E. Bats shall be no more than 2 1/4" in diameter and a maximum of 33" long.

## IV. Base Running

### A. Stealing

1. Base runners may attempt to steal any base except home (even on an overthrow of an attempted steal of third).

2. Once a pitched ball passes the batter, the ball is live and the runners may steal, bluff or take a secondary lead.

3. Play remains live until the umpire calls time or the catcher or another fielder subsequently returns the ball to the pitcher, the pitcher steps on the rubber and the catcher is in position to receive the ball. At that time, all base runners must be in contact with appropriate base.

### B. Taking Leads

1. Base runners may not leave their base before the ball passes the batter. However, a runner leaving the base before the pitched ball passes the batter is not out and base hits are not nullified. Standard Little League rules apply. Essentially, the runner must return to the base or, if the batter gets a hit, the runner must be placed one base in front of the hitter. Therefore, an early runner can only score on a triple or home run. If an early runner beats a force play, neither runner is out and the play stands.
2. If a team persists in having its runners leave the base before the ball passes the batter after the umpire's warning, it will then be within the umpire's discretion to further enforce the no leading rule by calling "out" any runner who leaves the base before the ball passes the batter.

### C. Sliding

1. When a fielder in possession of the ball attempts to make a tag play on any runner at any base, must either slide feet-first into the base or allow the tag to be applied without a collision. A runner who fails to "slide or avoid" is out regardless of whether the fielder holds on to the ball. A runner is not required to slide if no play is being made, nor is a runner required to avoid a collision as long as he/she slides feet-first.
2. Head first slides are illegal unless the runner is returning to a base. Any runner who makes a head first slide into a base is out automatically, regardless of whether or not a play is being made.
3. Stand-up collisions are not allowed. If the umpire feels that either the fielder or the runner intentionally caused such a collision, the offender may be ejected.
4. Un-staked bases usually move when players slide. If an umpire declares a runner safe and the base moves during the play, the runner should remain on the spot where the base had been and call "time." The umpire shall grant time out and return the base to the proper position. A player who chases after the base that has moved does so at his/her own risk and may be tagged out.
5. Coaches may not touch a runner when the ball is in play. If a coach does touch a runner, the runner shall be declared out. A home run ball that clears the fence is not in play.
6. Players, managers and coaches may request time from an umpire. Umpires are not required to grant time out and play is live until they do.
7. No runner may go more than three feet out of the baseline to avoid a tag. Any runner who does is out. Any runner who interferes with a fielder attempting to make a play on the ball, even if the runner is in the baseline, is out. A fielder may not fake a tag in order to induce a runner to slide. That is interference and the runner is awarded another base.
8. The infield fly rule is not called in the Middle Division.

## **V. Movement of the Game**

A. Games will start promptly at the scheduled time. A team unable to field at least eight players within fifteen (15) minutes of this time will forfeit the game.

B. No new inning shall begin after a quarter of the hour prior to the next scheduled game.

### **C. Game Preparation**

1. Each team must provide the umpire with a new game ball with the name of the team written on it. Used balls are to be conserved as much as possible and used for practices.

2. The home team for the first game of the day is responsible for field preparation-placing bases and drawing base lines, as well as preparing the mound and the infield. The home team for the last game of the day is responsible for returning all equipment to the Parks Department shed at the field.

## **VI. Rules of Conduct**

A. Unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of players, coaches, and parents is prohibited. It is up to adult participants to provide examples of good sportsmanship and fair play for players. Foul Language will not be tolerated; players as well as coaches will be suspended for one (1) game.

B. Once the teams are on the field, the umpire is in charge until the game is over. The umpire is responsible for keeping the game moving and beginning an ending on time.

C. Restrain yourself, your players, and your spectators. Umpires have authority from the league to enforce rules and to eject any coach, player, or spectator for objecting to a decision or for unsportsmanlike language or behavior.

D. Judgment calls by an umpire are not grounds for a protest. Only the interpretation of the rules may be protested. The manager must inform the umpire before the next play begins that the game is being played under protest and the umpire shall so inform the opposing coach. The protesting coach must submit a written protest to the league within 24 hours. The protest must describe the circumstances and the interpretation of the rules that the manager feels to be correct.

E. Coaches may leave their bench area only to confer with a player or with an umpire. They must first receive the umpire's permission to do so. Only the manager may discuss a ruling with an umpire.

## **VII. Safety Rules**

1. Safety batting helmets must be worn by all batters, base runners, and all Little Leaguers serving as first or third base coaches during practices and games. Regulation batting helmets are provided by the League. Runners must not intentionally remove their helmets while running the bases. If the umpire feels that a player did intentionally remove his or her helmet, that player is out.
2. A full set of catcher's equipment must be worn by players in the Catcher's position, including warm-ups. There are no exceptions. All Little Leaguers, playing any position, must wear a cup. No exceptions. All players found in violation, will not be allowed to play or continue playing that game.
3. The throwing of bats is strictly prohibited. If the batter throws the bat, the batter will be called out for dangerous play and the ball will be dead.
4. The swinging of bats is allowed only in the batters box. There is no on-deck circle allowed.
5. During games and practices, all persons not directly involved in the game or practice (batter, base runners, players in the field, umpires, and coaches) should remain at least three (3) feet behind an imaginary line that extends from the end of the backstop and runs parallel to the foul line.
6. Only players, coaches, and umpires are permitted on the playing field during play and practice sessions. Only players and coaches are allowed in the dugouts.
7. Metal spikes and cleats are prohibited.
8. Eyeglasses should be of "Safety Glass" and glasses should be secured with straps.
9. Plaster casts or those made of other hard substances may not be worn during the game.