



Heights-Norhill Little League



Peewee, Minor, Major and JR/SR Ground Rules

(see "Game Duration" and "Pitching" ground rules for additional information)

Game Preliminaries (All Divisions):

1. Home Team is responsible for setting up the field (bases, chalk etc). Visiting team is responsible for putting away the equipment at the end of the game.
2. Which team is Home / Visitor SHALL be based on the schedule published by the league. For first games during weeknights, Teams may swap visitor/home ONLY if the home team has fewer than the minimum number of players (see below) AND they expect a player(s) to arrive within the next 15 minutes. This MUST be communicated to the League Scheduler and the visitor/home roles will be swapped for the next game between the teams as well. Teams MAY NOT swap home and visitor on games played during the weekends.
3. Scorekeeping: Each team is REQUIRED to designate one person (which may be a person not on the field) as their scorekeeper during the game. They may use a digital app to do this, but a typical baseball paper scorebook is preferred (and provided by the league).
 - a. Each team SHALL keep a log of the number of pitches thrown by any player who pitches during the game (Minor, Major and Jr/Sr divisions only). In the event pitch counts are not kept, a player shall be deemed to have thrown the maximum number of pitches allowed in a game for their age and be required to observe the required number of rest days for that pitch count.
 - b. If disagreements arise which cannot be resolved by open discussion with the umpire, the HOME TEAM scorebook shall be considered the official scorebook for runs/outs and the VISITOR scorebook shall be the official scorebook for pitch-counts. (see the Protests section below for how to protest any issues).
4. Each team must have a minimum of 7 of THEIR OWN players present to play a game. A team must have a minimum of 6 players at game time and at least 7 by the end of the first inning or will forfeit the game.
 - a. "Picking up Players" – In the event a team has less than 9 players (10 for Peewee), that team MAY be allowed to "pick up" players from other teams. The following conditions and restrictions SHALL apply, and MAY NOT be changed under any circumstances: (there are NO EXCEPTIONS to these rules).
 - i. The opposing Manager has the option to NOT allow a team to pick up players.
 - ii. Pick up players shall be present at the beginning of the game and must be named to the umpire and opposing manager AT THE BEGINNING OF THE GAME and CLEARLY MARKED on the lineup card.
 - iii. Teams cannot pickup more than 2 players (3 for Peewee).
 - iv. Teams can only pickup players until they have a total of 9 players (10 for Peewee).

Example: teams with 8 of their own players can only pick up 1 additional player, unless Peewee, and then they can pick up 2 additional players).

Note: If a rostered player for a team arrives after the game has started, any "pick up" players in the game may continue to play.
 - v. Games played with one team unable to field at least 7 of its OWN players will be recorded as a forfeit with a score of 6-0. The umpires will remain to officiate the game, but the game will be recorded as a forfeit.
 - vi. Age / Division –
 1. Players may not play "down" a division. Players can only play "up". (**Example:** A player that is placed on a minor league team for the season may not be "picked up" for a Peewee game even if the player is age appropriate for the Peewee division.



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2. Players can only play “up” a maximum of one division above their League Age (their age as of Aug 31 of the year the game is being played). They must be League Age 6 to play in Peewee, 8 for Minors, 10 for Majors and 12 for the Jr/Sr division).
 3. Compliance with these Age/Division requirements is the responsibility of the Manager of the team using the “pick up” players. Violation of these rules SHALL result in:
 - a. The Manager of the team will be suspended for the team’s next two games
 - b. If discovered during the game, the player will be removed from the game and their position in the batting order recorded as an out.
 - c. If discovered after the game, the game results will remain as played.
 - vii. Pick up players **SHALL NOT** play the position of pitcher or catcher and **SHALL** be placed at the bottom of the batting order. Teams are **STRONGLY** encouraged to place any pickup players in outfield positions.
 - b. Any team playing with fewer than 9 total players (10 for Peewee) shall have an automatic out recorded for the empty positions in their batting order*.
5. Mandatory Play Requirements
- a. Continuous batting order of all players present is mandatory.
 - b. Players who arrive after the game has begun shall be added to the bottom of the batting order. If a player is reached in the lineup but has yet to arrive to the game an automatic out shall be recorded.
 - c. Free defensive substitutions. All players **MUST** play a minimum of six defensive outs.
6. Coaches
- a. Each team may have a maximum of three (four for Peewee) adults present in the dugout or on the field during the game. Please note that the Team Rep IS CONSIDERED one of these adults. All adults must have been previously approved by the league to be on the field/in the dugout.



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Game Play (All Divisions):

1. Maximum 5 runs per inning for the first three innings. In the event the run limit is reached as a result of a home-run hit over the outfield fence, all runs that score as a result of the home-run will count, even if that exceeds the 5 run limit.
2. Innings 4 to 6 (7 for Jr/Sr) are open innings. Open innings end after 3 outs or after the maximum number of at bats has been reached – whichever comes first. The Max Number of at bats for EACH TEAM is equal to the number of players on the team with the most players present. *See the “Game Duration” document the rules regarding time limits on games.*
3. With two outs in an inning, a COURTESY RUNNER may replace a runner who was the pitcher or catcher during the previous half-inning. The “courtesy runner” must be player in the batting order who made the last out. For Pee wee, a courtesy runner is only allowed to replace a catcher.
4. No limits on the number of bases that a runner can advance on an overthrow.
5. Stealing of home IS allowed except in the Pee wee division.
6. A dropped third strike IS an out for Minor division only. For Majors and Junior/Senior divisions, a dropped third strike is NOT an out and the batter-runner may attempt to reach first base prior to being tagged or the ball thrown to first base for a put-out.
7. Infield fly rule IS in effect.
8. Mercy rule: The game will end if one team is 8 or more runs ahead after playing 5 innings (4 ½ if the home team is ahead), 10 or more runs ahead after playing 4 innings (3 ½ if the home team is ahead) or 15 runs after playing 3 innings (2 ½ if the home team is ahead). (e.g. “8 after 5, 10 after 4, 15 after 3...”)
9. There is not a “must-slide” rule in Little League. The runner is NOT automatically out simply for making contact with the defensive player as long as an attempt was made to get around the fielder and the contact was not malicious in nature (umpire judgement).
 - a. Obstruction shall be called when a defensive player illegally hinders a baserunner (meaning he does not have the ball nor is making a play on the ball) regardless of the actions of the baserunner (slide, collision etc)
10. Coaches:
 - a. **One adult must remain “in or at” the dugout AT ALL TIMES.** For clarity, the coach must be able to touch the door to the dugout from where they are standing to be considered “in or at” the opening of their dugout. This includes times when a team does not have enough adults to have two base coaches and an adult in the dugout. For Jr/Sr games, the Umpire may adjust this definition at their discretion.
 - b. While on defence,
 - i. A maximum of two coaches may be outside of the dugout but must remain “in or at” (see above for definition) the opening of their dugout for the duration of the half inning unless granted TIME by the umpire. The third coach (if present) must remain fully inside the dugout. Umpires may eject coaches who violate this rule after one warning.
 - c. While on offense, a team is allowed;
 - i. two adult base coaches on the field who must remain in the base coach box unless they request and are granted a time-out by the umpire. Base coaches are allowed to talk to members of his/her team but are not allowed to intentionally distract members of the defensive team. This does NOT alter the rule above always requiring an adult in the dugout. Umpires may eject coaches who violate this rule after one warning.
 - ii. One adult coach to pitch during Pee wee division games.



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- d. Any coach who is offensive, derogatory, unsportsmanlike or overly argumentative with the umpires will be ejected from the field. The second time a coach is ejected from a game shall result in a suspension from the following two games. If a coach is ejected for a third time, it will result in a suspension of the remaining games for the season.



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Game Play - Peewee Baseball ONLY

1. Each batter will receive a maximum of five pitches. Normal rules apply for strike-outs – three strikes and the batter is out regardless of the number of pitches.
 - a. Exception: If a batter hits a foul ball on or after the fifth pitch, he or she is allowed to continue batting until the batter does not swing, swings and misses or puts the ball in play.
2. Defensive Players – Ten defensive players will be used. Any players above 6 must be position behind the infield on the grass and may not make a play on a batted ball until the ball reaches the outfield grass. Violation of this rule will result in the batter-runner being awarded first base or the result of the actual play – whichever is more beneficial to the offensive team.
2. The Pitcher shall wear a helmet with a protective mask and must have one foot in the dirt of the pitching mound or pitching circle when the pitch is delivered.
3. Coach Pitcher:
 - a. The Coach Pitcher may only interact with players on his team during an official time out. The Coach Pitcher MAY NOT interact with his players in any way during live play or during a dead ball (e.g. between pitches). EXCEPTION – the Coach Pitcher may make hand signals to position the batter but must not unduly delay the progress of the game (umpire discretion). The umpire will give the coach one warning for an infraction and the coach will be ejected from the game after the second infraction.
 - b. The pitching coach may stand or kneel but must pitch overhand. The pitching coach can pitch from at least 27 feet from home plate or, if present, a location marked on the field by the League.
 - c. If both teams agree, a defensive coach or other adult may be positioned behind the catcher to assist with missed ball retrievals. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should this coach provide coaching or other input to players on the field. They are there for convenience only – not to coach the game.
 - d. The Coach Pitcher must make every attempt to leave fair territory after the ball has been hit. The Coach Pitcher may not interfere with the defensive team and their play of the ball. The pitching coach may return to fair territory only after the play has been declared “dead.”
 - i. If a fair ball hits the Coach Pitcher and was unintentional (umpire discretion), the ball is “dead” and the batter is awarded first base. Other base runners will advance one base and only if forced.
 - ii. If the coach pitcher intentionally or carelessly interferes with the play, or obstructs, impedes, or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play (umpire discretion), the runner on whom the play is being made shall be declared out and all other runners shall return to the last base that was legally touched at the time the interference was called.
4. The play is dead when the pitcher has the ball in the “circle” (on the dirt) and raises the ball above their head and the umpire will call TIME. The umpire may also call TIME when the offensive baserunners are making no further attempt to advance. When the umpire has called TIME the play is “dead” and no further plays may be made by the defence.
5. Once the play is called dead by the umpire the play is over immediately, and runners will be awarded the base they are closest to (based on the ½ way mark between each base)
6. Intentional bunting is NOT ALLOWED. Players must attempt a full swing when attempting to hit the baseball. Umpires may deem a swing a full swing if they feel the player has made their best attempt to complete the swing.



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Rule Changes by Agreement between Coaches

The rules in the sections above are the DEFAULT RULES and are not based on “agreement”. However, Coaches MAY agree to some changes. Note that NO OTHER RULE CHANGES shall be allowed regardless of if the coaches agree or not.

BOTH coaches must agree and the agreement MUST be made BEFORE THE GAME BEGINS.

1. Minor/Major Baseball – Ten defensive players (four outfielders)
2. An opposing coach may agree to NOT impose automatic outs in the batting order if the other team is short of players.
3. Minor Baseball Only -- No stealing of home.
4. Majors / Junior / Senior Divisions -- Dropped third strike IS an OUT.

Appeals / Protests

1. Umpire judgement calls MAY NOT be appealed or protested.
2. If a Team Manager wishes to Appeal the a call made by an Umpire, they must call TIME before stepping away from being “in or at” their dugout. Once granted TIME, they should calmly approach the umpire who made the call and ask for clarification and state the purpose of their appeal. The Umpire may, at their discretion, confer with other Umpires (if present) before giving their decision.
3. Note – Appeals MUST be done by a team’s MANAGER. Assistant Coaches and Team Reps ARE NOT allowed to appeal a call during a game.
4. If a Manager still disagrees with the Umpire’s decision or has other reasons to formally protest a game, they must inform the umpire immediately and prior to the next play that the game is being played under protest. All protests must be submitted in writing to the League within 24 hours. All protests will be given to the HNLL Grievance Committee whose decision is final.
 - a. The Grievance Committee will not consider any protests relating to a judgement call made by an umpire.
 - b. The Grievance Committee will not consider any protests submitted by anyone other than the team’s official Manager.