

Princeton Little League Baseball

Spring 2019 President's Rules

For the Minor Division



The Minor Division

Welcome to the Minor Division!

The Minor Division is comprised of Little Leaguers aged 9-11 year olds. **Regular Season Standings are NOT kept, but there are playoffs at the end of the year with a Minor Division championship team declared.**

Skill levels for Minor Division players are often dramatically improved over what they were as Rookies. Players can field and pitch and hit and run with far greater effectiveness. They also have a better grasp the rules and strategies of baseball, which leads to a deeper understanding, and appreciation of the game itself. It's a great age to play ball!

As with all Princeton Little League divisions, coaches should stress player and team improvement, and having fun, over winning; though always strive to help players understand that all three are in fact closely related.

Minor Division Overview

Base stealing is permitted in the Minor Division; **leading off** the base is **not** permitted.

A Minor Division team can **steal home** once per half inning.

The **Ten Batter Rule** is in effect. Ten batters is the maximum number of batters a team can send to the plate in any half inning.

The Ten Run Mercy Rule is in effect. This means that after 4 innings (3½ if the home team is ahead), the game is over if the score is 10 or more runs apart.

Bunting is allowed.

The **Infield Fly Rule** is in effect.

There is no **Dropped Third Strike Rule** in Minors; three strikes you're out

Safety

- **Head first sliding is forbidden** in all Princeton Little League games. The penalty: the base runner is automatically out.
- A runner may not hurdle, jump over, or leap over a fielder unless the fielder is lying prone on the ground. Penalty: The runner is out, but the ball remains alive unless the umpire calls interference. Note: Jumping over a kneeling fielder is also illegal.
- Coaches are strongly encouraged to teach their players how to **slide feet first** as soon as possible in the season, and preferably before the first game.
- **Metal spikes** are not permitted in any Princeton Little League game.
- All male players must wear an **athletic supporter**. **Protective cups must be worn by all male catchers**. **Note:** all male players at this level are strongly encouraged to wear a protective cup.
- **Batting helmets** are required at all times while batting and running the bases.
- **Mouth guards** and **chest protectors** are encouraged to be worn by all players.
- **Cleats** (not metal) are also strongly encouraged to be worn by all players, not only because they improve performance, but also because the better footing they provide make cleats much safer than sneakers.
- **Slash bunting** (where a batter fakes a bunt, and then pulls back and takes a full swing) is forbidden in all Princeton Little League games. The penalty: the batter is out, the ball is dead, no runners can advance.
- No player except the batter is ever permitted to have a bat in their hands; there is **no on deck circle**. All offensive players except the batter and the runners must remain behind the fence and in the dugout.
- Minor players may not serve as first or third base coaches, only adult coaches.
- Further safety rules and guidelines are discussed below.

Pitching

Minor Division pitchers throw harder and more accurately than they did as Rookie Division pitchers. One or two years make a big difference. As a result pitchers can begin to think about strategies such as mixing in change ups and varying pitches and even location depending on the count, the score, the inning, etc.

Stealing is permitted in the Minor Division, but pitchers need not be distracted by having to hold runners on, as lead offs are not permitted. However unlike with Rookies, when the ball is returned to the pitcher it is often still live. And until the pitcher is back in contact with pitching rubber and the catcher behind the plate ready to receive the ball, runners can still advance.

This creates the challenge that Minor Division pitchers must begin to think about more than just pitching! Among other things, they must make sure runners have returned to their base before delivering a pitch. And they must think about covering first base on a ball hit to the right side, and with a runner on third, covering home on a wild pitch or passed ball.

All these extra challenges mean that teams will often begin to rely on just three or four players who are able to pitch effectively for most innings all season. This is understandable. But coaches are also strongly encouraged to look for opportunities to allow other players who express an interest to pitch as well.

Minor Division Pitching Overview

- There are **NO** balks in the Rookie or Minor Divisions of Princeton Little League.
- Since runners can't leave the base until the ball reaches the hitter, pitchers are free to pitch from the stretch, or the full wind up, whichever is more comfortable.
- A player, once removed as pitcher, cannot return to the position of pitcher in that calendar day.
- A player who has played the position of catcher for four or more innings in a game cannot pitch for the remainder of that calendar day.
- A pitcher who throws 41 or more pitches cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that calendar day.

- Pitchers (or any player) are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind except jewelry that alerts medical personal to specific conditions.
- Pitchers are only permitted to wear long-sleeved shirts under their uniforms which are of a solid color, not white.
- Pitchers are not permitted to wear wrist bands or sweat bands on their wrists or arms.
- After five consecutive free passes issued by a pitcher in the same inning, that pitcher must be changed. Free passes are defined as walks and batters hit by a pitch. Coaches and umpires should also strongly consider changing a pitcher who hits two batters in the same inning.
- In the Minors Division, a player may pitch a maximum of 3 innings (9 outs) or 50 pitches -- whichever comes first. See below for specific guidelines on pitch counts.

Balks and Illegal Pitches

There are no balks in the Rookie or Minor Divisions. Instead what would be considered a balk in the Intermediate Division is called an illegal pitch. The penalty for an illegal pitch is the pitch is called a ball and the runners do not advance. Umpires have wide discretion in the enforcement of this rule.

If a play follows an illegal pitch the manager of the offensive team may advise the plate umpire of a decision to decline the illegal pitch penalty and accept the play. Such election shall be made immediately at the end of the play. However if the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all base-runners advance at least one base on the action resulting from the batted ball, the play proceeds without reference to the illegal pitch. **Note:** a batter hit by pitch shall be awarded first base without reference to the illegal pitch.

Pitch Count Regulations

from Little League Headquarters:

- (a) Any player on a regular season team may pitch. **Exception:** Any player, who has played the position of catcher in four (4) or more innings in a game is not eligible to pitch on that calendar day.
- (b) A pitcher once removed from the mound cannot return as a pitcher.
- (c) The manager must remove the pitcher when said pitcher reaches the limit for his/her age group as noted below, but the pitcher may remain in the game at

another position:

- ◆ League Ages 11 -13: 50 pitches per day
- ◆ League Ages 9-10: 50 pitches per day
- ◆ League Ages 7-8: 50 pitches per day

Exception: If a pitcher reaches the per day limit imposed in Regulation VI (c) for his/her league age 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 put out;
3. The third out is made to complete the half-inning.

Note 1: A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day.

Pitchers league age 14 and under must adhere to the following rest requirements:

- ◆ If a player pitches 51 - 65 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- ◆ If a player pitches 36 - 50 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- ◆ If a player pitches 21 - 35 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- ◆ If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest is required.
- ◆ No player may pitch in games for three consecutive calendar days, regardless of rest requirement.

Exception: If a pitcher reaches a day(s) of rest threshold while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any of the following conditions occurs:

1. That batter reaches base;
2. That batter is retired;
1. The third out is made to complete the half inning

The pitcher will only be required to observe the calendar days(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.

This exception is designed to make the game go more smoothly and remove the awkward necessity of a manager having to pull out a pitcher in the middle of an at-bat because he/she has reached their day(s) of rest threshold. The result will be less instances of pitchers having to enter a game with a count other than 0-0; and less instances of batters having to face a pitching change in the middle of their at-bat.

For the purpose of reporting pitch counts, coaches should still report the total number of pitches thrown by any one pitcher in any one game. But they should also report in parenthesis after that total pitch count number the threshold number to be used to determine days of rest if that number is less than the total pitch count because of the above exception. **For example:** If Pitcher A threw 16 pitches, then began pitching to a new batter and threw 6 more pitches to that batter before being removed from the game, then Pitcher A's pitch count would be reported as 22(20). But if Pitcher A was taken out before pitching to that last batter then Pitcher A's reported pitch count would simply be reported as 16. In either case Pitcher A would require zero days of rest.

In the playoffs, the defensive team manager may call an intentional walk. The manager must call time, and notify the umpire of his decision. This must be done before the pitcher throws any pitches to the batter to be walked. Runners may not advance on an intentional walk, unless forced by the batter. Four pitches are charged to the pitcher. Again, this is for playoffs only.

Little League Strike Zone

The Little League strike zone is bigger in relationship to the hitter than the Major League professional (MLB) strike zone in order to help out pitchers, and encourage hitters to swing away and not just be up there for a walk.

The Little League strike zone is defined as that space over home plate which is between the batter's arm pits and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance.

Note: umpires tend to call pitched balls strikes which cross a few inches further inside the plate, and more than a few inches outside the plate. Again this is to give pitchers an extra break and to keep the game moving. Hitters, pitchers and coaches should be aware of this Little League reality and make the necessary adjustments.

Other Types of Strikes

In addition to 1/ called strikes, 2/ swings and misses, and 3/ foul balls, strikes can also arise from the following scenarios:

A strike is a ball that touches the batter's person as the batter attempts to swing at it. If this happens, a strike is called and the ball is dead.

A strike is a ball that touches the batter while the ball is in flight in the strike zone. In other words, if when a batter is hit by a pitch, the part of his/her body or uniform that was hit by the pitch was in the strike zone, then the batter is not awarded first base, but instead given a strike.

Any foul tip that is caught by the catcher can be called a strike, including the third strike. A foul tip is defined as a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught.

Pitching Machines

While pitching machines are never used in Minor Division games, they can sometimes be useful for practices, and for batting practice before games.

Tips for Using the Pitching Machine

- The machines are easy to set up, operate, and dismantle. However coaches must receive training in the proper care and operations of the units prior to using them.
- Unlike a real pitcher, the pitching machine has no windup, and gives no warning to batters before firing off a ball. Therefore, when using the machine to deliver a pitch to a batter, 1/ **always** look to make sure the batter is ready for the pitch. And 2/ **always** hold the ball up high before placing it into the machine as a signal to the batter that it is on its way.
- If the pitching machine throws more than a few unhittable pitches in a row, it should be adjusted. Minor tweaks to the legs or screws to modify the angle of delivery, and/or to the speed dial are usual all that's needed.
- **Important: after adjusting the pitching machine, always have the batter step out of the box and use the pitching machine to deliver a "practice pitch" in order to make sure the ball is headed over the plate and not in the direction of the batter!**
- Make sure there is enough gas in the generator tank before starting a practice.
- Make sure the power switch on the pitching machine itself is off before attempting to start the generator.

- Always engage the choke before attempting to start the generator.
- Once the generator starts, disengage the choke before turning on the machine.
- The recommended placement of the machines is immediately in front of the pitching rubber.
- Don't forget to set the pitching machine up on its three leg extensions before using. And return the leg extensions to their vertical holding slots on the machine after each use.

League-wide Pitching Machine Guidelines

Princeton Little League maintains four pitching machines and generators for league use. The machines are chiefly intended for use during Rookies Division games.

In addition, all divisions can use the machines for practices. The order of priority is: 1/ Rookie Division games, 2/ Rookie Division practices, 3/ Minor and Intermediate Division practices.

Important: please use only special AD Starr pitching machine balls in the machines. These balls will be model number PM-3 as marked on the ball. They can be found in a green mesh bag attached to the pitching machine. These balls are made of especially durable materials so that they can withstand the rigors of going through the pitching machine. Because of this they are expensive, so please make sure to gather them all up after each game or practice and return them to the green mesh bag. Please don't mix in other balls that are not marked "PM." And please don't put non-PM balls through the machine; it will tear them up.

The pitching machines and generators will be kept inside one of the Grover Park equipment sheds, and at a shed at Farmview. The sheds are secured with a key/combo lock and the pitching machines and generators must be returned to the shed, and the shed locked, immediately after use.

If a shed is to remain open for whatever reason during the player-pitch portion of a Rookie game, always make sure the shed is locked up before leaving the fields.

The machines are **not** to be transported away from the sheds at Grover or Farmview.

In the Field

Nine defensive players are allowed in the field, 6 infielders, including pitcher and catcher, and 3 outfielders. At no time are more than 6 players permitted in the infield.

Moving Players Around

Minor Division coaches are strongly encouraged to move players around and let them experience multiple positions, both during any one game, and during the season as a whole. Skill-sets which might one day point a player to a specific position are still developing. Playing multiple positions leads to a greater understanding and appreciation of the game on the part of the players. And perhaps most important of all, moving players around helps build enthusiasm for the game in each and every player, and a sense of team spirit for all players, coaches and parents.

During the game coaches are free to move players from position to position, and to and from the bench. A player removed from the game and placed on the bench one inning can re-enter the game the next inning, or indeed the next pitch without penalty.

The only exceptions to unlimited substitutions involve the pitcher and the catcher.

A pitcher once removed from pitching cannot return to pitching.

Once a pitcher pitches 41 pitches, they cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that calendar day.

Once a player plays four innings as catcher in any one game, they are not eligible to pitch for the remainder of that day.

Moving Players Around Rule / Bench Time Rule

All players must be given the chance to play the infield (which includes the positions of pitcher and catcher) for at least two innings every two games. There are only two exceptions to this rule: 1/ a player who expressly doesn't want to play the infield, and, 2/ a player who because of inexperience or difficulty focusing is deemed a safety risk.

Closely related: All players, no matter their level of experience, must spend at least one inning every other game on the bench. This is good not only for the less experienced players who get to feel what it's like to have their more experienced teammates cheer them on from the bench, but a little bench time is also good for the

more experienced players to remind them that baseball is indeed a team sport.

Note: If a team has 9 or less players present for a game, then that game does not count toward the bench time rule.

Also: If a player misses a game, then they can be considered to have spent time on the bench for that missed game.

A Catch

A catch is called when a player controls a batted ball in the glove before it strikes the ground. If a player having gained control of the ball loses control upon transfer to the throwing hand, the ball is still ruled a catch.

Obstruction

Obstruction occurs when a fielder who is not in possession of the ball, or in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of a runner. Fielders without the ball, or not in the act of fielding the ball, must get out of the way of runners or risk being called for obstruction.

Note: Little League further defines obstruction as taking place when a defensive player impedes the progress of a runner even while waiting for a throw by a teammate.

Penalties for Obstruction

The umpire will allow obstructed runners to advance freely to the base they would have otherwise been able to reach if no obstruction had occurred. If by advancing to the next base, the obstructed runner forces another runner to vacate a base, the umpire will allow that runner to advance as well. The umpire will always allow an obstructed runner to advance at least one base beyond the last base he had occupied before the obstruction, and sometimes more than one base.

Infield Fly Rule

The Infield Fly Rule is in effect. **So with runners on first and second -- or first, second and third -- with less than two outs**, umpires are free to invoke the Infield Fly Rule with any ball hit into the air that in their judgment an infielder can catch with

ordinary effort.

When the Infield Fly Rule is called, the batter is out, the ball is still alive, and runners may advance at the risk of that ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.

For the purposes of this rule, the pitcher, the catcher, and any outfielders positioned near enough to the infield shall be considered infielders.

Excessively Throwing the Ball to First Base by the Catcher or Pitcher after a Walk

Coaches are requested to keep this activity to a minimum.

All too often catchers, and sometimes pitchers, develop a fondness for throwing to first base after nearly every walk. The idea is to catch the runner inadvertently rounding first and making a move toward second, after which they could be tagged out. This hoped for tag out rarely happens. And the repeated attempt of it comes at a cost to the timely pace of the game, and to some extent the respect of the game itself. In addition, players might not realize that, just as with a hit, they are not at risk if they overrun first base after a walk as long as they return directly to first and don't make a move toward second.

Dancing

Coaches are also requested to keep to a minimum the activity of runners, especially runners on third, who attempt to distract a pitcher by jumping up and down, shuffling back and forth, clapping their hands, etc.

At Bat

The Minor Division, as with all Princeton Little League divisions, uses a continuous batting order. This means that all players present at the game will remain in the batting order for the entire game independent of their playing history that day on the field or time spent on the bench.

Safety

No player is allowed on deck. There is no on deck circle. Only one player may have a bat in their hands at any one time and that is the player at bat. The umpire may call out any player who has a bat in their hands and is not at bat.

All players will stay behind the fence and on the bench when not at bat, running the bases or in the field.

All players while at bat or running the bases must wear a helmet.

Late Arrivals / Leaving Early

According to Little League rules, when a division employs a continuous batting order, players can arrive late, leave early, and even leave during the middle of a game and return if necessary without penalty to the player or the team. Naturally most players will want, and are strongly encouraged, to arrive early for all games and stay the entire time. But this particular rule is available for players and their families in the case of an unresolvable conflict.

As a practical example, a player arriving just a little late might still be able to bat in the position that the coach had originally slotted for them provided that position in the batting order has not already been passed.

If the player's position in the batting order has been passed, then the late arriving player will be inserted last in the batting order. Naturally a coach also has the option of relegating any late arriving player directly to the bottom of the batting order, regardless of whether their original turn has been passed or not.

Again: there is no penalty for a player leaving early for whatever reason. That player's spot in the batting order is simply skipped.

The only exception is if a player's leaving early for reasons not related to illness or injury

causes their team to drop below 8 players. In that case the team with less than 8 players forfeits the game 6 - 0.

Coaches

The team at bat will position one coach at first base, and one coach at third base. A third coach will stay behind in the dugout to supervise the players and enforce proper conduct and adherence to the safety rules.

Bat Throwing

After the first warning, any player who throws a bat, whether after a swing, or while running to first base following a hit, walk, etc., can be penalized. Penalties are up to the umpire. But they can range from an extra strike, to an automatic out, to expulsion from the game.

No Dropped Third Strike Rule

Three strikes you're out.

Bunting

Bunting is permitted in the Minor Division. Players should be taught the proper techniques of bunting before being asked to bunt in a game. It is especially important for coaches to teach their players to get the top hand and its fingers behind the bat.

Bunting a ball foul with two strikes results in a strike out.

Ten Batter Rule

The Ten Batter Rule is in effect in the Rookie and Minor Divisions of Princeton Little League. This means that a team will send up ten batters per half inning, or surrender three outs, whichever comes first. The tenth batter will be called the "last batter."

Last Batter Rule

If the pitching machine, or coach, pitches to the last batter, then the last batter must either hit the ball into fair territory, foul out, or strike out. The exceptions are if the last batter is:

hit by the pitch, or
is the victim of catcher's interference.

In those two cases, for scoring purposes, all runners shall advance two bases and the inning will be over. In other words, any runner on second or third will score.

If a player pitches to the last batter then the inning can end as above, with a ball hit into fair territory, a foul out, or a strike out.

Or if the last batter is:

walked,
hit by the pitch,
or become the victim of catcher's interference,

then the inning will also end and all base runners will advance two bases for scoring purposes.

The Runners Shall Proceed Rule

When the 10th batter hits a fair ball, the base runners shall proceed home until a 3rd out is recorded, or until the ball is controlled at home plate by a defensive player, regardless of the number of outs previously recorded in that half inning. No tag out at home is necessary, nor can any additional runs score, on a ball put in play by the last batter after the ball is controlled at home plate by a defensive player. Also if the lead runner stops their progress home regardless of the number of outs, or location of the ball in the field, then the inning is over.

The practical implication of this rule is that when a 10th batter comes to the plate, coaches from the offensive team should alert their runners, and the batter as well, that in the event of a ball hit into fair territory they should continue circling the bases toward home, and not stop until either a 3rd out is recorded, or until the ball is controlled at home plate by a defensive player.

The defensive coaches should also alert their players that if the 10th batter hits the ball into fair territory they should either make a quick out of that batter, or another runner, or get the ball immediately to the catcher, or any another defensive player positioned at home plate.

Note: All players should always keep in mind that a ball is not foul **until the umpire says it is!** And that a ball struck into foul territory may well land in foul territory and spend some time there, but then bounce, roll, leak, tiptoe, etc., into fair territory before passing first or third base and thus be considered fair!

Base Running

Base stealing is permitted in the Minor Division. This adds an exciting component to the games for players and coaches and fans. Few Minor Division games go by without at least half a dozen steals. Some games feature many more. For safety reason for both runners and fielders, coaches should stress the need for their runners to slide whenever a play at a base looks to be close.

Coaches are also strongly encouraged to teach their players how to slide as soon as possible in the season, and preferably before the first game.

- **Lead offs are not permitted.** When a pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate and in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive delivery of the ball, base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has been delivered and has reached the batter.
- However, if a pitched ball is not struck by the batter and remains live, runners need not return immediately to their base. Runners can attempt to advance on passed balls and wild pitches, including stealing home. And again if the ball is live, runners can also attempt to advance on errant throws back to the pitcher and general inattentiveness on the part of the pitcher, the catcher, or any other player holding the ball.
- Runners must only immediately return to their last base, or continue on to the next base, if as stated above the pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate and in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive delivery of the ball.
- Minor Division teams can only steal home 1 time per half inning. (An unsuccessful steal of home does not count.) A steal of home is defined as anytime a runner advances home unaided by a hit, a put out, a fielder's choice, an error, a batter hit by the pitch, catcher's interference, coach's interference, obstruction, a walk or a balk.
- For the purposes of the above rule a steal of home will also be recorded if a runner advances home after:
 - 1/ an errant throw by the pitcher or catcher, or any player, attempting to pick off any runner not just the most advanced runner. In addition, the runner advancing home need not have originally been on third base to be considered to have stolen home in this scenario.
 - 2/ a wild pitch or passed ball.

3/ a failed exchange of the ball on the part of the catcher back to the pitcher, or any defensive player trying to get the ball back to the pitcher.

For example: if after a pitch the pitcher misses the throw back from the catcher, or any other defensive player, and a runner scores as a result, that runner is considered to have stolen home.

However, if a bad exchange happens between any two defensive players including the pitcher at the end of a continuous play involving a hit, an error of a batted ball, a put out, or a fielder's choice, then the runner advancing home would not be considered to have stolen home.

Consequences of a Runner Leaving Early

Little League rule 7.13 governs these situations. The many permutations of this rule are challenging to keep track of even for seasoned umpires and coaches.

Here is a brief and by no means exhaustive overview of what can happen when any base runner leaves before the ball reaches the batter. For the purposes of this rule, if one runner is guilty of leaving early, they all are.

In a steal attempt where the batter does not hit the ball – the runner or runners are allowed to continue. If the runner or runners are put out, then the out stands. If the runner or runners safely reach the base that they were attempting to advance to, then the runner or runners are returned to their last occupied base without penalty.

After a foul ball not caught – runner or runners are returned to their last occupied base without penalty.

After a clean hit – the runner or runners and the batter/runner are permitted to continue. If a play is made that results in an out, then that out or outs will stand. If no put outs result, then the batter is awarded the base value of that hit as determined by the home plate umpire and placed on that base. The runner or runners must either return to their original base, or to the unoccupied base nearest to the one that was left.

Example: runner on second leaves early, batter hits a clean double: runner goes to third only, batter is awarded second.

If after leaving early, a runner or runners are forced to the next base, or home, by a clean hit – runners might still be permitted to advance, and/or score

without penalty. Or depending on the situation, they might be penalized by not being allowed to go as far as they otherwise might have.

Example: runners on second and third, batter hits a clean double: runner on third scores, runner on second is moved to third, batter is awarded second.

If not forced, runner(s) leaving early do not advance or score.

Example: runner on third, batter hits a clean double: runner is returned to third. Batter is awarded second.

All runners will be allowed to score when the batter hits a clean triple or home run, regardless of whether any runner left early.

Interference

Offensive interference is an act by a member of the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play.

Interference as a result of a runner or batter getting in the way of a fielder attempting to field, catch, or throw a ball

- Runners, or the batter, need not have physical contact with a fielder to be called for interference. Nor do they need to show intent. Yelling, waving arms, running too close to a fielder are also grounds for interference.
- Runners need to go around a fielder who is in the act of fielding a ball even if that fielder is in the base path. In such a case the runner cannot be called out for exiting the base path to avoid the fielder.
- The fielder's protection begins the moment the ball is hit. That protection continues as the fielder completes their initial play. The fielder's protection ends if they misplay the batted ball and have to move to recover it.
- The penalty for interference: if interference is called on a runner, that runner is out, and the ball is dead.
- If a batter is called for interference, the batter is out and the runner or runners are returned to their original base. **Exception:** if with less than two outs a batter is called for interference while a runner attempts to

score, then the runner is out and the batter continues to bat unless struck out on the play. With two outs the batter is out and the run does not score.

- Also if a batter is called for interference but the defensive team nevertheless records an out on the play, then that out stands and the batter remains batting unless also struck out on the play.
- No runners are allowed to advance as a result of an interference call on any other runner or batter.

Interference as a result of an offensive player being struck by a batted or thrown ball

- If a runner is hit by a batted ball while standing in fair territory before it has passed or is touched by a fielder then the ball is dead, the runner is declared out, and the batter awarded first base.
- If the batter/runner comes into contact with their own batted ball before that ball has passed or touched a fielder, then the batter/runner is out unless still within the batter's box in which case the ball is declared foul.
- If the runner is hit by a thrown ball then the runner must have shown intent to interfere with the thrown ball in order to be called for interference. Otherwise the play continues.
- There is no such thing as defensive interference except in the case of catcher's interference. "Defensive interference" is called obstruction.

Slide or Avoid Rule

as reprinted for the Little League Rule book

7.08(a)(3) -- Any runner is out when ... the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag;

In practice, the spirit of this rule – to provide an extra measure of safety for both runners and fielders – can be undermined because, as written, the rule seems to imply that with a bang bang play, the benefit of the doubt goes to the runner. Furthermore the rule implies that all a runner has to do is make some attempt at evading, for example, attempting in any way to get around the catcher, and they can't be called out for failure

to slide even if contact is made.

However, Princeton Little League recommends that coaches advise their runners to **always slide** if at all in doubt that the ball might be in the possession of the fielder by the time the runner get to the base. Coaches should stress sliding in these situations not only for safety reason, but also because failure to slide is a terrible way for a runner to be called out, especially if it happens at home plate.

No Head First Sliding

Head first sliding is forbidden in all Princeton Little League games. Any runner sliding head first into a base will be called out.

Exception: runners returning to a base. So if a runner overruns a base, or if there is an attempted pick off of a runner, that runner is permitted to dive back to their base.

No Hurdling

A runner may not hurdle, jump over, or leap over a fielder unless the fielder is lying prone on the ground. Penalty: The runner is out, but the ball remains alive unless the umpire calls interference. Note: Jumping over a kneeling fielder is also illegal.

Courtesy Runners

Courtesy runners are not allowed in any Princeton Little League game. The one exception is when a runner becomes injured. In that case the courtesy runner must be the player from the batting team who made the last recorded out. If the injury occurs in the first inning, the courtesy runner must be the offensive player furthest away in the batting order from coming to the plate who is not on base.

Disagreeing with the Ump

It is perfectly acceptable to request a time out and approach the adult umpire to discuss an interpretation of the rules as they relate to the proceeding play. This is part of the game and it is in everybody's best interest to get interpretations of the rules correct.

Naturally it is critically important that all discussions with the head umpire proceed in a calm, cool, and collected manner, and if a hot temper temporarily gets the better of any coach, that a cooling down happens as soon as possible. Coaches should never forget that their highest responsibility is to set a good example of conduct for the players.

What is **not acceptable** is for a coach to approach the head umpire to complain about a judgment call. This means among other things, balls and strikes and out/safe calls on the bases. Let the umps do their job!

If history is any guide, bad calls will happen with unfortunate frequency during the season, sometimes even multiple times in the same game. (Far more common will be calls that are perceived to be bad, 99.9% of the time by the team most hurt by the "bad" call.)

For all these reasons, and more, coaches should be quick to counsel their players that bad calls are part of the game and that they have a way of evening out over time. And players should never blame the umpires for an undesirable outcome.

Junior Umpires

Princeton Little League employs a number of younger umpires to work the bases. They can be as young as eleven, and for many this is their very first job.

IMPORTANT RULE: No coach or player can have any interaction with a junior umpire at any time during a game. Junior umpires are not to be engaged with in any way, and they are most especially never to be argued with. If a coach has a disagreement with the way a junior umpire makes a call, that coach must approach the head umpire only. The head umpire, at his or her discretion, may then consult with the junior umpire away from the coaches and render a decision.

All official appeals must also go through the head umpire only no matter which umpire made the original call.

Game Protests

Game protests at the local Little League during the regular season are entirely under the jurisdiction of the local Little League Protest Committee.

The local Little League Protest Committee is composed of the president, player agent, league umpire in chief and one or more other officers or directors who are not managers or umpires. This committee is totally responsible for solving protests of regular season games at the local Little League.

The president of the local Little League may consult the District Administrator or Regional Headquarters for interpretation of a rule or regulation as it applies to the protest, but not for a ruling on the protest. The ruling by the local Little League Protest Committee is final.

Protests over a rule interpretation of a play by an umpire in a game must be registered with the head umpire of that game **before the next pitch is thrown**. Other types of protests must be filed **before the end of the game**.

Protests involving judgment calls made by umpires are never allowed.

Only the manager, or a coach acting as manager in the manager's absence, can lodge a game protest.

Game protests are only allowed in the Minor and Intermediate Divisions.

All interested parties are invited to provide information and testimony to the Protest Committee while the protest is being looked into.

A brief and timely report will be released to all players and families in the division concerning the outcome of all decisions.

Important note: If any Protest Committee member has a child playing in the same PLL division as the protest originates from, then that Protest Committee member must recuse themselves from the committee while the issue is being resolved. They will be replaced by another PLL board member who does not have a child in the division.

Mid-Season Adjustment Protests

On rare occasion it might be necessary to make a mid-season adjustment to improve the experience of all players in a division. This might entail an adjustment to the

President's Rule's, or any other alteration that is thought necessary to enhance competitiveness, fair play, player safety, etc.

Such mid-season adjustment proposals will also be decided by the Protest Committee, especially those adjustments that might effect the relative competitiveness of the teams.

Only team managers can lodge a formal protest requesting a mid-season adjustment.

All interested parties are invited to provide information to the Protest Committee while the mid-season adjustment protest is being looked into.

A brief and timely report will be released to all players and families in the division concerning the outcome of all decisions.

Important Note: If any Protest Committee member has a child playing in the same PLL division as the mid-season adjustment protest originates from, then that Protest Committee member must recuse themselves from the committee while the issue is being resolved. They will be replaced by another PLL board member who does not have a child in the division.

Number of Players

- All official games must have at the very least 8 players actively participating on each team no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time or the game is forfeited by the understaffed team with a recorded score of 6 - 0.
- Games can still be started and continued when a team has fewer than 8 players, but such a game will be scored officially as a 6 - 0 win for the team with 8 or more players. Umpires will remain, and all regular Little League safety, conduct and field rules will remain in force.
- After a game begins with eight or more players on each team, if a player becomes sick or is injured, the game may proceed with fewer than 8 players.
- However if a player must leave during the game for any reason other than illness or injury, and that player's leaving results in their team having fewer than 8 players, then the game is forfeited by the score of 6 - 0.

Time Limits on Games

For weekend games:

No inning can start after 1 hour and 45 minutes from the time the game was originally started.

For weekday games:

Prior to Memorial Day, no new inning can start after 1 hour and 30 minutes from the time the game was originally started.

After Memorial Day, no new inning can start after 1 hour and 45 minutes from the time the game was originally started.

In all cases the final inning will be played in full, unless the visiting team is trailing after the top half of the final inning is completed at which time the game is over, or unless the umpire stops the game due to darkness or weather related issues, in which case the final score will revert back to the last completed inning.

Note: the bottom half of an inning may start after the time limit has expired as long as the top half of the inning started before the time limit expired.

Note: the official start of a game is the time the game actually started, not the scheduled start time. For example: for a 1 hour and 45 minute game: 6:07pm to 7:52pm. The managers and head umpire should agree on the start time immediately before the game starts.

Suspended Games

A game is considered suspended if one full inning of play was completed, but less than 4 full innings (or 3 ½ innings if the home team is in the lead). If less than one full inning was played, then the game when rescheduled will start from the beginning following regular time limits. **However:** if the time limit is reached for any game, then that game is official regardless of the number of innings played.

Suspended games are made up on the same day as the next scheduled game between the two teams, and are to be completed prior to that scheduled game. Suspended games are played to the six-inning conclusion or the set time limits noted in the preceding section. If a game is suspended, and there are no games left between the two teams, the coaches may mutually agree to schedule the suspended game at their discretion.

Whenever a suspended game is completed, the players and lineup may not change. The batting order reverts to the original order, with the first batter up following the last out from the suspended game. Players not present at the original game may be inserted into the game. A player not present at the original game must be placed in the last spot in the batting order. It is both managers' responsibility to confirm the game time played and where the game is picked up.

Pitches delivered in suspended games shall be charged against a pitcher's eligibility. In suspended games resumed on another day, the pitchers of record at the time the game was halted may continue to pitch to the extent of their eligibility for that day, provided that said pitcher has observed the required days of rest.

For example, a league age 9 pitcher (50 pitch daily limit) delivers 37 pitches in a game on Monday when the game is suspended:

If the game resumes on Wednesday, the pitcher is NOT eligible to pitch in the resumption of the game because he/she has not observed the required days of rest (37 pitches requires 2 days of rest);

However if the game resumes on Saturday (and the pitcher has not pitched in a game in the meantime), the pitcher IS eligible to pitch up to 50 more pitches in the resumption of the game because he/she has observed the required days (2) of rest.

If the game resumes two weeks later the pitcher IS eligible to pitch up to 50 more pitches in the resumption of the game, PROVIDED he/she is eligible based on his/her pitching record during the previous four days.

Rainouts

Rained-out games are made up as scheduled by the President of Princeton Little League baseball. All efforts will be made to reschedule on Thursday nights within 7 days of the rained out game. Unless otherwise determined by the President, all teams within a division will make up games on the same date.

Rained-out Games & Rescheduling

If a field is unplayable, or if a game is rained-out while in-progress, the league will reschedule the games ASAP, in this priority order:

Intermediates
Minors
Rookies

Please know that the league must schedule umpires to be present for all games.

NOTE: The league has reserved the Grover 2 and Grover 3 fields on Friday evenings to accommodate make-up games. The league reserves the right to **move or cancel any** scheduled practices or non-league games so as to allow games to be played.

Wet Field Guidelines

Monday through Friday, the Recreation Department makes the call on whether games are played. They have a hotline that you can call after 4:00 pm: 688-2054. Sometimes there is rain after 4:00PM and the coaches and umpires together make the call based on field conditions at 6:00PM.

On Saturdays, the coaches and umpires make the call at the scheduled game time, e.g., 9:00AM. Sometimes on Saturdays, the 9:00AM games have to be canceled, but later games can be played, because if it has stopped raining, field conditions will generally improve as the day goes on.

On weekends, **ALL** of the coaches with scheduled games are responsible for making every effort to make the field playable for **ALL** games on that day. For example: in the case of rain on Friday, even the coaches who are scheduled to have a game on Grover 2 starting at 2:00 on Saturday afternoon should join the other coaches scheduled on that field **on Saturday morning**, along with any other volunteers, to prepare the fields for games.

We generally do not play when there is standing water in the infield base paths. If the infield is damp or slightly muddy, coaches are encouraged to rake the surface and may apply a **limited amount** of infield mix on the slightly muddy area. Infield mix is **NOT** to be used in the case of standing water.

If there is standing water, there will quite likely not be a game on that field for several hours, as the raking will not cure it in a timely fashion, and the use of infield mix is not appropriate. If more than a few bags of mix must be used, this will damage the field and still not deliver a playable surface.

When raking water on the infield, **DO NOT PUSH THE WATER ON TO THE GRASS AT ANY TIME**. Pushing the water on to the grass causes damage to the field. It should never be done. If there is a large puddle, the only thing that can be done is to rake the water onto another section of the infield dirt or mix (NOT THE GRASS).

If there are soft muddy conditions, coaches or a volunteer parent recruited by the coach, should rake the section of the infield between innings. Also, between games on Saturdays, coaches and volunteer parents should rake and drag the infield, batter's box and pitcher's mound areas.

If there is no standing water in the infield, we will normally play the game.

For All Coaches

Home team managers are responsible for providing two new game balls for each game.

The Batting Cages

The Grover batting cages are labeled 1 and 2, left to right. All teams playing games on Grover 2 and 3 have priority access to the cages for the 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Grover 2 will be associated with the cage on the left (#1), while Grover 3 will have the right cage (#2). Apart from these times, the cages may be used by any Princeton Little League team.

The pitching machines are ideal for use in the batting cages. The same care and precautions must be taken when employing the machines in the cages as when they are in use on the fields.

Appendix A

Multi-Division Comparison Table

	Rookies	Minors	Intermediates
Stealing	No	Yes	Yes
Leading off	No	No	Yes
Head-First Sliding	No	No	No
Hurdling	No	No	No
Slash Bunting	No	No	No
Bunting	No	Yes	Yes
Dropped Third Strike	No	No	Yes
10 Run Mercy Rule	No	Yes	Yes
10 Batter Rule	Yes	Yes	No
Last Batter Rule	Yes	Yes	No
Infield Fly Rule	No	Yes	Yes
Balks	No	No	Yes
Number of Innings	6	6	7
Playoffs	No	Yes	Yes