

Neartown Little League

Machine Pitch Local Ground Rules
Passed by Board Resolution February 9, 2020

Section 1 (Game Length and Players)

- A. On school nights, no new inning shall start after one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes. Maximum innings per game will be six; no extra innings.
- B. Games on Fridays and Saturdays, no new inning shall start after one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes. However, if the game is tied after six innings extra innings will be allowed as long as another game is not scheduled to follow.
- C. If both teams have less than the minimum amount of players to start a game, the game will be cancelled and rescheduled.
- D. Little League Rule Reminder (LLRR): All teams will bat the entire roster. The batting order will remain the same throughout the game.
- E. LLRR: A late arriving player will be allowed to play and will be placed at the end of the batting order.
- F. Starting 25 minutes before game time, Home Team will take batting practice and Visiting Team will take field practice. 15 minutes before game time, Home Team will take field practice and visiting Team will take batting practice. 5 minutes before game time, Managers will exchange roster batting orders, conference with the Umpire to clarify rules & adjustments.

Section 2 (Scoring)

- A. For the first three (3) innings, a half inning will consist of a maximum of three (3) runs or three (3) outs, whichever comes first.
- B. In the fourth, fifth and sixth innings a half inning will consist of a maximum of five (5) runs or three (3) outs, whichever comes first (LLRR).
- C. LLRR: In innings four through six, if one team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs at the end of an inning, the game will be considered over.

Section 3 (Pitcher Position)

- A. The pitcher must be positioned with one foot inside the 10' diameter dirt pitcher's circle equal to or behind the pitcher's rubber until the ball has crossed home plate or been put into play by the batter.
- B. For defensive purposes, the play is dead when the pitcher has control of the ball in the pitcher's dirt circle or the lead runner's forward progress has been stopped.
- C. When the play is dead, any base runner's position relative to a point halfway between bases shall determine if the runner is eligible to advance to the next base or return to the previous base.

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Section 4 (Batting)

- A. Each batter will be given a maximum of five (5) pitches, discounting foul balls on the last pitch. If, at the end of five (5) pitches, the batter has not put the ball in play or struck out swinging, the batter is out. "No Pitch" can be called by the umpire for wild or erratic pitches.
- B. If the fifth pitch is out of the strike zone, the umpire can call "No Pitch" even if the batter swings.
- C. If there are two (2) balls in a row that are pitched out of the strike zone, the umpire will call No Pitch and allow the coach to adjust the machine.
- D. The speed of the pitching machine will be **40 mph**.
- F. A batted ball that hits the pitching machine or the adult feeding the pitching machine, before being touched by a fielder is a dead ball. However, the batter shall be awarded first base and any base runners shall advance one (1) base.

Section 5 (Base Running and Stealing)

- A. (LLRR): Base runners can steal a base (remove foot from the base) only when the ball (from the pitching machine) has "reached" home plate. Prior to Game #7 for both teams, the ball must also exit from the Catcher's area dirt circle, as marked by white chalk. If not chalk circle is present, then the grass border will be used.
- B. Base runners can steal second and/or third base only. Stealing of home is not allowed.
- C. A runner stealing second may not advance to third on an overthrow.
- D. A runner starting the pitch on third can only advance on a batted ball.
- E. All head first slides will be considered automatic outs. The Umpire's discretion will cover situations of returning to a previous base. LLRR: Players may slide into any base, but must be leg first.

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Section 6 (Fielding)

A. Outfielders must start each pitch in the outfield at least twenty (20) feet behind the arc where the outfield grass begins.

B. Overthrows – all runners advance 1 base on an overthrow. “Dead ball” will be called only if the next throw is back to the pitcher.

C. 1st Base overthrow Clarification: An "overthrown" ball at this base is one that is not stopped or controlled by the 1st baseman & results in the ball crossing the foul line.

If the ball is overthrown, all runners have the opportunity to advance - at most - one extra base. However, the hitter, if they elect to attempt to reach 2nd base does so at their own peril & can be tagged or thrown out in the process. With this we would encourage a player (right field/1st baseman) who properly fields an overthrow to be given the opportunity to result in a recovered out.

Of note, this is *not* a dead ball situation, with guaranteed advancement.

e.g. The most runs that can be scored on such a play is 2: with bases loaded, 2nd & 3rd may score, but 1st is held at 2nd Base.

D. All players must play infield a minimum of 1 inning during the first 3 innings of the game.

It is highly recommended players stay in any assigned field position for 2 consecutive innings – this gives them a better opportunity to understand the duties of each spot on the field and not be constantly trying to remember what to do where.

It is imperative that players are intentionally moved between the outfield & infield during the course of the game and between each of the field positions over the course of the season.

E. No player may play the same position for an entire game. This means each team will need to identify at least 2 players at each position, including catcher – exceptional situations will occur & kids should not be forced to play positions in which they or you have legitimate safety concerns, but this should be an unusual situation (short players) that both Coaches communicate about.

F. No player will shall sit on the bench 2 innings in a row. Players will be substituted on defense every inning. The manager is not required to report defensive changes. A violation of this rule must be protested by the opposing manager to an Umpire prior to the Umpires leaving the playing field. The result of violation of this rule will be a 1 game suspension of the manager. Additional disciplinary action may be taken by the League President for subsequent violations.

Section 7 (Coaches and Umpires)

A. No coaching is allowed from the pitcher's mound. Coaches may be positioned in the outfield or near home plate in order to assist only defensive players. Offensive Coaching assistance will occur from designated boxes at 1st and 3rd base or from within the dugout.

B. The home team is responsible for providing the official scorekeeper. The scorebook must be signed by both managers and the umpire.

C. The visiting team is responsible for providing the scoreboard operator.

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Section 8 (Team and Field Preparation)

- A. The Home Team will occupy the 1st base dugout.
- B. The Visiting Team will occupy the 3rd base dugout.
- C. The Home Team is responsible for providing four (4) new game balls to the umpire prior to the start of each game.
- D. All players shall remain within the fenced-in area after the game starts, except for restroom visits.
- E. No food or drinks (except water or sports drinks) are allowed in the dugout during the game. There are no exceptions other than for medical necessity.
- F. Players may not chew gum while practicing or playing due to the choking hazard.
- G. LLRR: Players must be in uniform, including cap, to participate in games.
- H. Both home and visiting teams are responsible for cleaning up their respective side of the field and dugout following games.
- I. The home team is responsible for chalking the field, putting out the bases, setting up the machine and any other field preparation before the game, including watering the infield.

Machine Setup (for Consistency)

- a. Game/Field –
 - i. The legs shall be set with two forward facing home plate and the one, rear leg abutted against & centered to the forward edge of the pitching rubber. This will prevent machine “walk” and position the ball release approximately where an actual pitcher would release when pitched.
 - ii. The games balls (4x provided by the HOME teams) will be roughed up with infield dirt so that the sheen is removed and run through the machine several times before setting the pitch height.
 - iii. The pitch height will be such that the practice tee, at its lowest level & set ~2” forward of the front edge of the home plate, shall be grazed by the pitched ball. Taller or shorter batters will need to adjust their position in the box, but the intention is to always give the batter a chance to meet the ball in front of their body over the plate in a position that sits in the middle of the strike zone, approximately belt high.
 - iv. Prior to the beginning of the 4th inning, the machine pitch height will be recalibrated to the same as the start of the game.
 - b. Batting Cage for pre-game warm-ups –
 - i. The distance between top dead center (TDC) of wheel to the front edge of the plate has been measured, per Game/Field setup described, at 42’.
 - ii. There are a tie wrap and blue tape on the sidewalk side of the fence locations to align the front legs and TDC of the wheel near the entrance of the cage
 - iii. The front of the plate aligns with the first support pole on the sidewalk side from the back of the cage.
- J. The Visiting Team is responsible for dragging/raking the field after a game and returning bases and equipment to the storage areas, turning off lights if last game of the day, and locking all areas.