

## TRI-TOWN AAA LEAGUE RULES

(Updated: 04/24/2025)

The following rules are not intended to be a comprehensive guide of all rules.

Unless otherwise noted by the following rules, the current ***Official Regulations and Playing Rules of Little League Baseball AAA Division*** will apply (references are noted where applicable).

Coaches should read and become familiar with all official Little League playing rules.

### **I. GENERAL RULES**

#### **A. Teams**

1. Each team may field a maximum of 9 players at one time.
2. Each team must be able to field a minimum 8 players at all times during the game or will be required to forfeit the game. Players from other teams (***AA level only***) may be used as “call-up” players for a team that needs players (e.g., less than 9 players available for a game). Call-up players must be inserted at the end of the batting order for the game.
3. If a team plays with 8 players, the 9th position in the batting order will be treated as an automatic out. Automatic outs will not be applied to players who leave the game due to injury or illness, and can be waived at the mutual agreement of opposing coaches depending on circumstances (e.g., 9th player is an unexpected no show).
4. Free substitution of players is allowed at all times.
5. All players must alternate sitting out and no player shall sit out for more than 2 innings per game, unless injured or due to disciplinary reasons. The objective of this rule is to prevent coaches from repeatedly sitting out the same players. (***TRI-TOWN Rule***)
6. No manager or assistant coach is allowed on or near the field of play during a game. Managers and all assistant coaches must remain in the dugout area during all times unless coaching a base.
7. Coaches must confirm score and pitch count at the end of each half inning (with coaches from the opposing team).
8. Wins and losses will be maintained by each team manager and submitted to the League Director for the purpose of determining league standings and playoff matchups.

#### **B. Games**

1. Games will begin promptly at the scheduled times and will consist of six (6) innings, or five and one half (5 1/2) innings if the home team is winning the game.
2. **Time Limit:** No inning will be allowed to be started **after 1 hour and 50 minutes** following the scheduled start time of a game (ie: 7:35 PM for a weekday game that was scheduled to begin at 5:45PM). Also note rule #4 below.
3. A complete inning shall consist of each team batting and making three (3) outs. **Extra innings** will occur if teams are tied after 6 complete innings and time limits have not expired as noted in rule #2 above.
  - a. Extra Innings Format: Starting in the top of the seventh (7th) inning, and each half inning

thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed on second (2nd) base. **Example:** If the number five batter is the lead-off batter, the number four batter in the batting order will be placed on 2nd base (*Tournament Rule 14*).

4. Games will be suspended or stopped when in the sole judgment of the umpire if weather, darkness or other conditions make further play unsafe or impossible.
5. A game must reach four (4) complete innings or the home team is leading after three and one-half innings in order to be considered a regulation game (*Rule 4.10(c)*). **Exceptions: If “Time Limit” (rule #2 above) or “Mercy Rule” (rule #8 below) conditions have been reached.**
6. If **rule #5 above has been satisfied AND** a game is stopped due to weather or time requirements during an incomplete inning and the home team has not made 3 outs, the winning team will be the home team if leading the game. If the home team is not leading the game, the winning team will be determined by the score at the end of the last completed full inning (*Rule 4.11(d)*).
7. If a game is called before being considered a regulation game (**i.e., if rule #5 above has not been satisfied**), the game will be rescheduled and resumed exactly where it left off (*Rule 4.10(d)*).
8. **“Mercy Rule”:** If after **three innings** (two and one-half innings if the home team is ahead), one team has a lead of **15 runs or more**, the losing team shall concede the game. If after **four innings** (three and one-half innings if the home team is ahead), one team has a lead of **10 runs or more**, the losing team shall concede the game. If after **five innings** (four and one-half innings if the home team is ahead), one team has a lead of **8 runs or more**, the losing team shall concede the game.

## II. PLAY

### **A. Pitching:**

1. Pitching rules are based on a player’s **League Age** as determined by Little League Baseball. The Age Determination Date for a Little League Baseball player is the **ACTUAL AGE OF A CHILD ON AUGUST 31 OF THE CURRENT YEAR**. For example, a player who is currently 10 but will turn 11 on or before August 31st is considered a League Age 11 year old for the season. A player that doesn’t turn 11 until September or later is considered a League Age 10 year old.
2. The pitching distance (front side of the pitcher’s rubber to the rear point of home plate) will be forty six (46) feet.
3. Any player on a team may pitch and there is no limit to the number of pitchers that a team may use in a game.
4. Intentional walking is not allowed. (*TRI-TOWN Rule*)
5. Balks do not apply.
6. **A pitcher once removed from the mound cannot return as a pitcher.**
7. **A pitcher that delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day. 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.**
8. A pitcher may not pitch in more than one game in a day.

9. Managers may designate someone to track pitches during the game and must provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either the opposing team's manager or any umpire (e.g., when a pitcher is removed from the game or at the end of each half-inning). The team manager (head coach for the game) is solely responsible for knowing when the pitcher reaches the limit for his/her age group as noted below, and must be removed. The pitcher may remain in the game at another position. If a pitcher reaches the limit for his/her age group while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until the batter reaches base or is put out.

**Pitch Limits by League Age:**

**11-12 y.o.: 85 pitches per day**

**9-10 y.o.: 75 pitches per day**

**7-8 y.o.: 50 pitches per day**

**REMINDER: League age is determined by a player's age on or before August 31<sup>st</sup>.**

10. All pitchers must adhere to the following **rest requirements:**

- If a player pitches 66 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- 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 days of rest are required.

**11. Managers are responsible for maintaining pitching records, verifying adherence to all of the above rules, and must provide appropriate documentation to the league (e.g., entering pitch counts to a google form).**

**Notes:**

1. The withdrawal of an ineligible pitcher after that pitcher is announced, or after a warm-up pitch is delivered, but before that player has pitched a ball to a batter, shall not be considered a violation. Little League officials are urged to take precautions to prevent protests. When a protest situation is imminent, the potential offender should be notified immediately.

2. Pitches delivered in games declared "Regulation Tie Games" or "Suspended Games" shall be charged against pitcher's eligibility.

3. 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 said pitcher has observed the required days of rest.

**Example 1:** A league age 10 pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on Monday when the game is suspended. The game resumes on the following Thursday. The pitcher is not eligible to pitch in the resumption of the game because he/she has not observed the required days of rest.

**Example 2:** A league age 10 pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on Monday when the game is suspended. The game resumes on Saturday. The pitcher is eligible to pitch up to 75 more pitches in the resumption of the game because he/she has observed the required days of rest.

**Example 3:** A league age 10 pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on Monday when the game is

suspended. The game resumes two weeks later. The pitcher is eligible to pitch up to 75 more pitches in the resumption of the game, provided he/she is eligible based on his/her pitching record during the previous four days.

**Note:** The use of this regulation negates the concept of the “calendar week” with regard *to pitching eligibility*.

## **B. Base Running:**

1. Bases will be 60 feet apart. Games will be played at base distances as fixed at the home field.
  2. **Time out** will automatically occur when *any player* has full and complete control of the ball at the end of a play anywhere within the dirt of the **pitcher’s mound**. Base runners that are more than half-way to the next base will be allowed to continue to that base at their own risk.
  3. **Time out** will occur when requested by a player **AND** granted by the umpire.
  4. Base runners may advance only one base as a result of an **overthrow** to a base when the ball is deemed **OUT OF PLAY** by the umpire. However, if the ball is still **IN PLAY** as a result of an overthrow or other error, base runners may continue to advance at their own risk until time is considered out.
  5. **Base stealing:** Base runners cannot **lead**. Base runners may **leave the base** at their own risk only after the ball has been delivered and has *reached the batter (Rule 7.13)*.
    - a. A “steal” is defined as an advancement of the runner to the next base during a pitch. **Passed balls** and **wild pitches** are also included as “steals” as part of this definition, as is an **advancement to 2nd directly following a walk** (including in the case of a passed ball or wild pitch on ball four). Errant throws back to the pitcher from the catcher are considered **ERRORS** and are NOT considered “steals” as part of this definition.
    - b. A team total of 5 successful "steals" (as defined above) will be allowed each half inning. Only two successful "steals" of home per inning may occur as part of the 5 successful steals/inning. Note: If after five successful steals any runner is successful, "Time" will be called and the runner(s) will be returned without penalty. If caught stealing, the runner is "out".
    - c. If there is an overthrow or other error on a play **initiated by a “steal” attempt** and the ball is still **IN PLAY**, the base runner may advance at their own risk. In this case, advancement from 2nd to 3rd will **NOT** be counted as a stolen base. **HOWEVER**, advancement to home **WILL** be counted as a “steal” of home. A runner may **NOT** advance to home on a play **initiated by a “steal” attempt** unless the team has a “steal” of home left in that half inning.
- Example 1:** A team has used three (non-home) “steals” in the inning and a player on first base attempts a “steal” of second base (steal #4 of 5). There is an error on the throw, and the runner advances to third base (not a steal). The same or subsequent error allows the runner to advance to home (steal #5 of 5). This is allowed since the team still had a “steal” of home available.
- Example 2:** A team has already used both of their “steals” of home in the inning and a player on first base attempts a “steal” of second base. There is an error on the throw, and the runner advances to third base (not a steal). The runner **CANNOT** advance on the same or subsequent error on the play initiated by the “steal” attempt because the team had already used both of their

“steals” of home.

**Example 3:** A team has already used 1 “steal” of home in the inning and has runners on first and third base. The player on first base attempts a “steal” of second base and the catcher throws down to second base. On the throw, the runner from third advances to home. *\*This advancement home counts as the team’s final “steal” of home for the inning.* If there is an error on the throw from the catcher or a subsequent error on the play initiated by the “steal” attempt, the runner may advance from second to third (not a steal), but NOT to home since the second and final “steal” of home for the inning was already used during the play.

**Example 4:** A team has already used both of their “steals” of home in the inning and has runners on second and third base. Following a pitch, the catcher makes an error throwing the ball back to the pitcher. The runners CAN advance at their own risk for as many bases as possible INCLUDING TO HOME since the advancement was on an error and NOT initiated by a “steal” attempt. These advancements are NOT considered as “steals” nor are they considered a “steal” of home since the play did not start with a “steal” attempt as defined above (**Rule 5a**).

**Example 5:** A team has used all of their “steals” in the inning and has runners on first and third base. The player on first base FAKES a steal attempt, drawing an errant throw from the catcher. Players may not advance because the errant throw was initiated by the attempt to deceive or bait the catcher into an error. "Time" will be called and the runner(s) will be returned without penalty.

**6. Dropped 3rd Strike:** A batter will NOT be able to advance to first base if the third strike is not caught.

**7. Obstruction** by a fielder occurs when the fielder blocks off a base, base line or home plate from a base runner while not in possession of the ball (**Rule 2.0**). *If a play is being made on the obstructed runner*, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before touching first base, the ball is dead and all runners shall advance without liability to be put out, to the bases they would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, if there had been no obstruction. The obstructed runner shall be awarded at least one base beyond the base last legally touched by such runner, before the obstruction. Any preceding runners forced to advance by the award of bases as the penalty for obstruction shall advance without liability to be put out (**Rule 7.06 (a)**). *If no play is being made on the obstructed runner*, the play shall proceed until no further action is possible. The umpire shall then call “Time” and impose such penalties, if any, as in that umpire’s judgment will nullify the act of obstruction (**Rule 7.06 (b)**).

**8. Interference** by a batter or runner occurs when the runner fails to avoid a fielder who is attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If in the judgment of the umpire interference has occurred, the batter or runner will be ruled out and all other runners shall return to the last base that was legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules (**Rule 7.09(j) & Rule 2.0**). **Interference** also occurs when a base runner or batter willfully and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball with the obvious intent to break up a double play. If the *interference is committed by the base runner*, the base runner AND the batter will both be ruled out (**Rule 7.09(f)**). If the *interference is committed by the batter*, the batter AND the base runner who advanced closest to home plate will both be ruled out regardless where the double play might have been possible (**Rule 7.09(g)**).

**9. Courtesy/substitute base runners** will be allowed for injured players. The substitute base runner

for the injured player **MUST** be the player that made the last out. For the regular season, a courtesy runner for the pitcher and/or catcher of record will be allowed when there are two (2) outs. The courtesy runner **MUST** be the player that made the last out (**Rule 7.14(b)**).

10. “Tagging up” is allowed. Runners may attempt to advance at their own risk.

11. **“Avoid Contact” Rule:** All base runners must slide or attempt to get around (avoid contact) at any base where the defensive play **HAS THE BALL** and is waiting to make a tag (Rule 7.08(a)(3)).

**There is NO “must slide” rule.**

- If the fielder (any fielder, not just the catcher) **DOES NOT** have the ball, and there is a collision, the runner **CANNOT** be called out. However, if the umpire determines that the runner deliberately attempted to injure the fielder, the umpire could eject the runner for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Head first sliding is not allowed going into any base, but is allowed if returning to a base. If a runner slides head first while advancing, the runner is out (**Rule 7.08(a)(4)**).

### C. Batting:

1. Each team will bat all available players utilizing a **“continuous batting order”** system. Teams must establish a fixed batting order at the beginning of each game.

2. For safety purposes, **on-deck** batters are **NOT** allowed.

3. **Infield fly rule** will apply at the AAA level. An **infield fly** (*as determined by the umpire during play*) is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before there are 2 outs. The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of that ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball has been touched, the same as on any fly ball (**Rule 2.0**).

4. **Bunting is allowed.** A **bunt** is a batted ball not swung at, but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly. The mere holding of the bat in the strike zone is not an attempted bunt (**Rule 2.0**).

5. Half swing or “slash bunt” is prohibited. Slash bunt is defined as a half or full swing or an attempt at a half or full swing after the player assumes a bunting stance (either squaring or pivoting). If at any time while in the batter’s box, the batter squares or pivots as if to bunt, he/she either must bunt, attempt to bunt the ball, or let the pitch go. **The umpire MUST call the batter out if, in his/her judgment, the batter was attempting a slash bunt.**

6. *For innings played from the start of the game until those started 15 minutes prior to the time limit*, each team will bat until they make **3 outs OR until 7 total runs have been scored. Any inning that starts within 15 minutes of the time limit (i.e., inning(s) starting after 7:20 for a 5:45 game start time) has no run limit and each team will be allowed to score as many runs as possible before they make 3 outs.**

Exception: In a potential run shortened game (bottom of the 3rd, 4th, or 5th inning) prior to being within 15 minutes of the time limit, the home team will be allowed to score more than 7 runs and as many runs as it takes to come within 14 runs in the 3rd, 9 runs in the 4th, and 7 runs in the 5th inning to avoid the “Mercy Rule.”

7. Any bat used during play must bear the “USA Baseball” logo indicating that it meets the USA Baseball youth bat performance standard (USABat) (**Rule 1.10**). Coaches are responsible for checking that bats are approved for use.

### **III. MISCELLANEOUS**

1. It is the home team’s responsibility to provide 3 game balls for each game.
2. All players, managers, assistant coaches, volunteers and parents must adhere to the **TRI-TOWN Code of Conduct** at all times.
3. All players, managers, assistant coaches and volunteers must complete and sign a **TRI-TOWN Participation Waiver Form** before they will be allowed to participate in any capacity.
4. All managers, assistant coaches, and any volunteers must complete all appropriate documentation to become a **Little League Volunteer** and be deemed eligible by one of the **TRI-TOWN Board of Directors** before they will be allowed to participate in any capacity.
5. All managers and assistant coaches must complete and sign a **TRI-TOWN Rules Acknowledgement Form** before they will be allowed to coach in their respective division(s).
6. **Regular Season Standings** will be determined as follows:
  1. Most points earned in a season (win = 2 points, tie = 1 point).
  2. Head to head records vs. opponent(s) with identical point totals.
  3. Greater number of wins among teams with identical point totals.
  4. Average run differential in games against the tied teams only.
  5. Average total runs allowed in games against the tied teams only.
  6. Total runs allowed against all teams.
  7. Coin Toss.

#### **7. Playoff Tournament: TBD**

- a. Playoff matchups and overall bracket will be assigned by the regular season standings.
- b. Playoff games will be completed until there is a winner (regardless of time limit) provided that, in the sole judgment of the umpire, weather, darkness or other conditions does not make further play unsafe or impossible (rule #I.B.4 above). Any innings starting after the time limit has expired will begin with a runner on 2nd base, playing under the “Extra Innings Format” (rule #I.B.3.a above).

### **IV. CONCUSSION POLICY**

If a medical professional, Umpire in Chief, the player’s coach, the player’s manager, or the player’s parent has determined a player sustained a possible concussion, the player must be, at a minimum, removed from the game and/or practice for the remainder of that day. The league must also be aware of its respective state/provincial/municipal laws with regards to concussions and impose any

additional requirements as necessary. His/her return to full participation is subject to:

- The league's adherence to its respective state/provincial/municipal laws;
- An evaluation and written clearance from a physician or other accredited medical provider; and
- Written acknowledgement of the parents.