

Longwood Babe Ruth League – Rookies

Revised (1/21/2024)

1. Home Team and Visiting Team Responsibility

- The home team, as per the official league schedule, is responsible for supplying two (2) new baseballs to the Head Umpire and providing an Official Scorekeeper for record-keeping purposes.
- The home team manager or coach is responsible for setting up and testing the pitching machine prior to game start, along with returning the machine to the shed after the game.

2. Time Limit of Games:

- No new inning will start after 1 hour and 30 minutes from the official start time. Weeknight games stop at 2 hours. The 2-hour rule doesn't apply to weekend games. The official start time is declared by the umpire when the defensive team is on the field, and the first batter steps into the batter's box.
- In the event a game ends due to a 2-hour time limit, the score will revert to the last completed inning. This will determine the final score of the game if the game is "official" per rule 4 below. The 2-hour rule does not apply to weekends.

3. Tie Games

- Tie games continue until broken, or time expires. A tie game is considered as 1/2 of a win and 1/2 of a loss in the standings. Tiebreakers involve head-to-head records, and if still tied, a one-game playoff will take place between the two teams involved.
- In case of a three-way tie, one team receives a bye in a single-elimination tournament.

4. Run Rule:

- In the Rookie Division, all games will end under the following conditions:
 - The game is official.
 - Either team has a fifteen (15) run lead and has had equal times at bat.
 - The home team is leading.
- Time limits, as per section 2, will be in effect.

5. Official Games:

- A game is considered official when one of the following conditions is met, and if terminated afterward, the results are officially recorded:
 1. The completion of 4 innings if the visiting team is winning, or

2. The completion of 3 1/2 innings if the home team is winning, or
 3. The time limit has been reached.
- Any game stopped due to rain or other reasons before reaching the required number of innings is considered a suspended game and must be played to completion at a later date.
 - Time limits carry over to the completion portion of suspended games.
 - If both teams have the same number of runs at the end of an official game, the game is declared a tie.

6. Batting Rules:

- All players shall be in the batting lineup.
- A team's "at bat" will end when that team scores six runs within the inning (maximum number of runs per inning is six) or three outs are recorded. In the sixth inning, play will continue until three outs have been recorded or the game is over.
- A batted ball that hits the pitching machine will be considered a dead ball. The batter is awarded first base, and all runners advance one base.
- Each batter is allowed a maximum of four (4) pitches or three (3) strikes. If the ball has not been hit into fair territory, the batter is out unless they foul off the 4th pitch. A caught foul tip on the 4th pitch or any pitch thereafter is a strike, and the batter is out.
- There are no walks. Any player hit by a pitch is awarded first base by the umpire's judgment.
- A ball that bounces in front of the plate is automatically considered a "no pitch." The home plate umpire determines if any other pitch should be declared a "no pitch" in extreme cases when the pitch is not hittable from any position within the batter's box.
- Machine adjustments should be made at the end of an inning, unless a ball or player hits the machine, or the umpire determines that the machine must be adjusted. Managers from each team will be consulted during machine adjustments. The umpire can make adjustments at any time due to a machine malfunction.
- The pitching machine shall be set up on the pitching mound, 46 feet from home plate, with a league-specified speed (approximately 43 mph).

Courtesy Runner Speed-Up Rule for Catcher:

- The player in the batting order where the last out was recorded or any player not currently in the game may replace the current catcher (the player physically playing catcher when the 3rd out was recorded) as a courtesy runner at any time.
- The catcher will remain in the game, and the courtesy runner will retain all substitution rights (if the courtesy runner has substitution rights).

- If the player who made the last recorded out is on base, batting, or has already been a courtesy runner in that inning, the new courtesy runner would be determined by going back to previous outs to the next allowable courtesy runner or to any player not currently in the game.
- In the first inning, if a courtesy runner is used for the catcher (who is listed in the lineup when the lineups are turned in) and there are no outs recorded, the courtesy runner will be the player furthest removed from the catcher needing the courtesy runner or any player not currently in the game.

7. Player Requirements to Start a Game:

- Each team must have a minimum of nine (9) players at the "official start time" for a game to begin.
- If the minimum player requirement cannot be met, the game is considered a forfeit, and the win goes to the team with the required number of players.
- If both teams cannot field the minimum number of players, the game is declared a double forfeit.
- In case of a forfeit, both managers can petition the league president, division rep, and player agent to reverse the forfeit and reschedule the game.
- Unanimous consent of all five parties (league president, division rep, player agent, and both team managers) is required for rescheduling, playing, and counting the game in the standings.
- Once the game starts, if a team cannot field at least eight (8) players, that team forfeits the game.
- A player leaving a game due to injury or illness is skipped over in the batting order and is not considered an out when their turn at bat arrives.
- If a player leaves a game for any reason other than injury or illness, they must remain in the batting order and are considered an out when their turn at bat arrives.
- If a team cannot field the minimum number of players due to a scheduled game on a recognized religious or school function, the game may be canceled and rescheduled without penalty, provided notification is submitted at least 48 hours prior to the game date. Games cannot be rescheduled for any other reason.
- A borrowed player is only allowed to meet the minimum number of players required to avoid a forfeit. Borrowed players are only allowed to play outfield positions and must be placed at the bottom of the batting lineup.

8. Players Arriving after the Start of Games:

- If a player arrives after the start of the game, they must be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- Defensively, a late player will be counted as playing a defensive inning for any inning they missed.
- For example, if a player shows up after the second inning begins, the manager must play that player for one inning to comply with the minimum play rules.

9. Fielding and Coach Placement:

- **Defensive:**
 - Two defensive coaches are allowed on the field while their team is playing defense.
 - Defensive coaches must be in foul territory at all times, beyond first and third base.
- **Offensive:**
 - One Manager or Coach is allowed at First Base, and one Manager or Coach at Third Base.
 - A manager may take up an additional position not past the batter warm-up circle to provide support for batters.
 - At no time shall a manager or coach stand at or near home plate during the length of the batter or batters' time at bat.
 - The maximum number of offensive coaches on the field at one time will be three (3).

10. Minimum Playing Time Rules:

- For both the spring and fall seasons, each player must play a minimum of three defensive innings and have at least one at-bat per game.
- Every player will be given the opportunity to play in the infield for at least two innings per game. Infield positions include, pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, short stop, and third base.
- If a team is mathematically unable to comply with the minimum play rule, they will not be subject to a forfeit.
- No player will be the starting substitute in two consecutive games or two consecutive innings.
- Four (4) players are to be placed in the outfield. League rotation rules apply for all players regardless of number. Infield designated by separation of the outfield grass and clay area.

11. Rules of Play:

Infield and Outfield Play Rules:

- All infielders must begin play in the infield, designated by the clay area.
- Only infielders can tag a runner or touch a base to record an out.
- All outfielders must begin each pitch in the outfield, designated by the outfield grass.
- Outfielders may not record an out except for a fly ball (Fall Only).

Overthrow Rules (Fall Only):

- An overthrow is defined as a throw by an infielder (including the pitcher or catcher) where the intended receiver of the throw does not field the throw, and the ball passes by the intended receiver.

- A throw coming in from an outfielder to the infield does not constitute an overthrow.
- A player may advance only one base on an overthrow.
- Only one overthrow can occur on a play.
- The advancing runner may be tagged out as they are approaching the base or if they overrun the base to which they are advancing.
- If a player advances to an additional base, time will be called, and the player returned to the previous base.
- If the ball is thrown over the fence, then all runners will be advanced one base.

Dead Ball Rule:

- Play will be stopped when the runners have been stopped from advancing.
- It will be up to the the umpire to determine when the ball is dead and to cease play by holding both arms in the air.

Bunting Rules:

- Bunting will be permitted, but fake bunting is not allowed.
- The batter cannot show bunt and then pull the bat back and swing for the safety of defensive players.
- Penalty for fake bunting (whether contact is made or not):
 1. Batter will be called out.
 2. Ball will be declared dead, and all runners will return to bases.
- On the 2nd occurrence, the manager will be reported to the Rookie Division Rep who will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors for possible sanctions.
- Bunting on the last pitch, if foul, the batter is out.
- Pitcher must remain behind the front of the machine and cannot charge on bunts until the ball has been released by the machine.

12. Scorebook

- If a manager or coach was ejected from the game by the umpire or board member, the scorekeeper MUST note the ejection in the scorebook.

13. Dress Code

- The league furnishes each player with a hat, shirt, and belt or socks. Every player must wear a complete and matching uniform for all league games, including matching pants. Exposed jewelry such as wrist watches, bracelets, large or loop-style earrings, and neck chains are prohibited.

14. Team Direction and Strategy

- Authority for team direction, strategy, and leadership rests with the team manager and coach. Team direction, strategy, and leadership during a game must come from the manager and coach who are present on the field. Parents may not "coach from the stands" in the form of giving signals and calling plays.