

## **2017 Verona Little League Local Rules ROOKIE LEAGUE BASEBALL**

**Emphasis:** The emphasis will be on learning to play and enjoy baseball.

**Rules:** The official rulebook will be Little League Baseball Official Regulations and Playing Rules, copyright 2017 by Little League Baseball, Incorporated. The only exceptions allowed are those spelled out in this document.

**Please note these key safety rules:**

**Rule 1.08 Note 1 – No on deck batters are permitted**

**Rule 1.08 Note 2 – Only the first batter of each half- inning is allowed outside the dugout between half innings**

**Rule 3.17 - Players and substitutes shall sit on their team's bench or in the dugout unless participating in the game or preparing to enter the game**

**Game Length:** Games will be six innings in length. **No new inning can begin after the game is one hour and twenty minutes old.** If there was no preceding game, the one hour and twenty minutes will be measured from the schedule starting time. If a preceding game on the field ran long, every attempt should be made to still start your game at the scheduled starting time. In this situation, the one hour and twenty minute time will begin when the game begins. An inning is considered started after the third out of the home team is registered. If the score is tied at the end of the time limit or six innings, the game will end in a tie. Coaches are encouraged to hustle players on and off the field. The plate umpire is the official timekeeper. Even when a game is tied, you are subject to the time limits.

For games that do not have a succeeding game scheduled the umpires and coaches must agree **prior to the start of the game** to go beyond the 1 hour 20 minute limit. However, in no case will games exceed 1 hour 45 minutes.

**Players/Substitution:**

- Ten players will be used on defense as long as there are minimums of ten players present. If one team has fewer than ten players present, the other team can still use ten.
- Four players must be on the outfield grass and remain on the grass until the ball is hit. This will be strictly enforced by the umpires. Coaches should work cooperatively to ensure players are adhering to the rule.
- Outfielders must align and follows: 2 to the left side of the center line and 2 to the right side of the center line, i.e. no outfield shifts.
- All players in attendance will be included in the batting order. A batting order should be established and roll over game to game or a coach can mix their batting order for each game as long as player is given equal opportunities in different batting order positions and there is not a gross inequity in at bats between all players during the course of a season. If a coach is using a rotation batting order and a player is missing for a game then they will be skipped for that game and return to their previous batting order position for future games. (For example a team will set the order for the first game 1-12. If player #6 makes the last out of the game then the next game will start with player #7 leading off then 8,9, 10 etc.. In the next game If player #3 makes the last out of the game then player #4 leads off the next game followed by 5,6,7 etc.). There will be free substitution of all players.
- All players in attendance should play at least four innings in the field. A player cannot sit on the bench twice until all roster players have sat on the bench at least once. A player must play in the outfield either during or before the 4th inning and every player should play at least twice each in the infield and outfield during a six inning game. Playing catcher constitutes playing an infield position. A player can only play a specific fielding position for a maximum of two innings per game (each outfield position is considered unique).
- Coaches must track player positioning. Coaches must document their batting line-ups and player rotations prior to the start of the game. Head coaches must exchange player rotation charts before the game begins. This can easily be accomplished with a spreadsheet or other electronic tools available in downloadable app format. **THIS RULE WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED THIS YEAR.**
- Exceptions to the playing time rule include injury, players that arrive late or need to leave early, player safety and player discipline issues. Teams with fewer than ten players may gather up to three players from other teams to reach a total of ten players. These substitute players must play the outfield and bat last. Teams with fewer than

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seven of their own players will forfeit their game. If a team cannot find sufficient substitutes from other teams, but can field at least seven of its own players, there is no forfeit.

\*\*Rookies teams will use catchers. However, to expedite the games, each team will be required to have a competent adult, 16 or older, (with a glove) backing up their team's catcher only for pitched balls that get by the catcher.

**Special Pinch Runners:** Special pinch runners will not be allowed except for the following exceptions.

- A courtesy runner for the player who will be catcher in the next half inning is **required** when there are 2 outs. The player making the last out will be the runner.
- Prior to the game a coach may seek an exception from the opposing coach to accommodate a special situation

**Pitching Machine:** A pitching machine will be used in Rookie League games. All pitching machines must be set at 37mph. Adjusting the speed is strictly prohibited. If a machine needs a speed adjustment, it should be done with the consultation of both head coaches after both teams have completed a full inning. Adjustments are allowed to be made to a machine to correct the flight of the ball.

The umpire will operate the pitching machine, unless the coach from the team that is batting decides to operate the machine. If a coach opts to feed the pitching machine, the coach is expected to stay out of the way of any ball that is hit by the batter and allow fielders to make plays on the ball. If the ball hits a coach or if, in the umpire's judgment, the coach obstructs the view or otherwise hinders a player in making a play on a batted ball, the umpire will call the batter out for interference by the coach, time will be called and all runners will be returned to the bases they occupied before the pitch.

**Strikeouts and Walks:** Batters are allowed four swinging strikes. There are no called strikes, no walks, and no hit batsman. There will be a maximum of 8 pitches to each batter starting on Monday, May 15th. If the batter has not put the ball in play or struck out, then the player will be called out upon the 8<sup>th</sup> pitch. The only exceptions are: 1) if there is an obvious malfunction or adjustment needed with the pitching machine (this will be determined by the umpire), then that pitch will not count towards that batter's 8 pitches; or 2) If the batter fouls off the 8<sup>th</sup> pitch, he/she will get another "8th" pitch.

**Runners Advancing on Overthrows:** Runners cannot advance on overthrows.

**Runners Advancing on Hits to the Outfield:** When a fielder in the outfield releases a ball on a throw toward the infield:

- (1) Any base runners occupying a base must stay on that base and cannot advance further, and
- (2) Any base runners approaching a base may not advance beyond that base.

A runner must be clearly beyond the base in order to continue to the next base. The play should continue and the umpire will move a runner back if they were not clear of the previous base. The rules are in force regardless of the outcome of the throw. The throw does not need to reach the infield or be caught by another player.

**Dropped Third Strike:** The batter will not be able to run on a dropped third strike.

**No Infield fly rule:** The infield fly rule will not be enforced in Rookie League games

**No Leading Off:** Runners may not lead off base until the ball has reached the plate.

**No Stealing:** Stealing will not be permitted in Rookie League games.

**Bunting:** Bunting is not allowed in Rookie League games.

**Base Coaches:** Both base coaches must be adults.

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**Field Coaches:** Teams will be allowed to have up to two coaches on the outfield grass for defensive instructions. Coaches must not interfere with play, nor physically guide or touch a player while the ball is in play.

**Runs Scored:** A maximum of five (5) runs per inning. There is no maximum to the number of hitters who may bat before the fifth run is scored. There is no mercy rule.

**Sliding:** The runner has the primary responsibility to avoid a collision with the defensive player. Headfirst slides by an advancing runner are disallowed. An advancing runner who slides headfirst will be declared out and the ball will remain in play. This does not apply to a runner returning to a base from a run down or a pick-off situation [rule 7.08(a)(4)]

**Obstruction (Fielder Interference):** If a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball, impedes the progress of any runner, obstruction shall be called on the defensive player who blocks off a base, base line or home plate from a base runner while not in possession of the ball. Note that the catcher must not block any part of the plate from a runner attempting to score unless they are in possession of the ball.

**Runner Interference:** If a runner intentionally interferes with a thrown ball, the runner is declared out. If a runner, hinders a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball that has not been fielded (whether such hindrance is intentional or unintentional), the runner is declared out. Aggressive attempts by the runner to dislodge the ball from a defensive player or to breakup double plays will result in the runner being declared out. If a defensive player is in possession of the ball, the runner is responsible for doing one of 4 things: sliding, attempting avoid the fielder while remaining in his base line, returning to the previous base (if not forced) or giving himself or herself up and being tagged out. If the runner does not slide and makes any contact other than incidental contact with the defensive player (often the catcher), the runner normally will be called for interference for failing to attempt to avoid the fielder with the ball and declared out.

**Thrown Bats:** The first batter of any team who, after swinging at a pitch, intentionally or unintentionally throws the bat shall result in a warning to the entire team. Subsequent infractions by any team member shall result in the batter who threw the bat being called out. It shall be the umpire's judgment whether or not the bat was thrown.

**Composite Bats:** Coaches (not umpires) are responsible for ensuring that their players are not using any illegal composite bats. Little League has declared composite bats other than those specifically approved by Little League in 2017 illegal. Coaches should check any new composite bats being used by their team before their use. The Little League has a web site available for checking which bats are legal that is linked on the Verona Little League site. Any disputes concerning composite bats used in games should be referred to the Verona Little League President.

**Umpires:** Games will have one umpire. If the umpire is feeding the pitching machine (because the batting team's coach has not opted to do so), then the umpire will be standing on the pitcher's mound. If a coach opts to feed the pitching machine, then the umpire should stand in the same position as a field umpire minors through major leagues with no runners on ("A" position by first base) or a runner only on first base ("B" position between first and second base). If a runner is on second or third base, the umpire should stand near the pitching mound so he can see plays at any base and at home.

\*\*\* Under no circumstances and under penalty of coaching privilege suspension or forfeiture, will coaches argue, verbally accost, intimidate, touch, or otherwise cause emotional distress to umpires. Talking calmly with an umpire about a play, call, or rules is permitted. League representatives will be monitoring and can be called to the field to enforce the rule. The league representative will have full authority to remove a coach from the game. THIS WILL BE A MAJOR POINT OF EMPHASIS FOR THE LEAGUE THIS YEAR. The VLL Executive Committee will have the final and binding decision on coaching privilege suspension or forfeiture.

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**Protests:** Protests of games will not be allowed.

**Severe Weather:** At the sound of a severe weather siren, other official warning, or at first sight of lighting, the game in progress shall be stopped immediately. In the case of rain or wet fields, the coaches are responsible for assessing the playing conditions and making the appropriate decision. In all instances, it is the responsibility of the coaches to properly interpret and enforce the intent of this rule. Rule 4.10 applies as to whether the game is postponed or declared official.