

## **Capitol City Little League A Division Rules Modified Spring 2022**

The purpose of the A Division program is as an introductory, developmental league for players league age 6, 7, and 8. League age 6-year old players must have previously played in the National Division. Most of the kids are typically K, 1st, and 2nd graders.

This is a machine pitch league where a mechanical pitching machine is used to introduce players to hitting a moving ball and to build baseball skills fundamentals. The emphasis should not be on winning, but rather playing the right way through good sportsmanship, consistency, hustle, and being a good teammate. Winning should be a by-product of those teachings.

Outs and scores are kept for the first time but the major emphasis is development over competition.

To the extent not covered by the following local rules approved by the Board of Directors, Little League International's Official Regulation rule book and Little League Operating Manual standard will apply. Managers/coaches are responsible for familiarizing themselves with these rules.

### **Rostering**

Players are placed on a team by the A Division Commissioner. When possible, players are placed with friends and classmates based on team requests. Teams should be rostered at 10-12 players per team with a strong recommendation that no roster exceed 13 players. It is CCLL's experience that team sizes that reach into the teens—even if desired by participating families—limit player opportunities and detracts from the Little League experience.

### **Players allowed on the field**

All players must be officially registered and assigned by CCLL. No one who is not registered, and whose name does not appear on the official league roster may practice or play with a CCLL team.

### **Number of players and lineup**

CCLL imposes greater playing requirements than Little League rules to encourage player development and to provide players with opportunities at all positions. No player will be asked to sit out for a second inning until every other player on the team has sat out at least one inning. (The goal is that there should never be a situation where some players have played the entire game and other players are sitting out more than one inning.)

A continuous batting rule shall be followed; all players present for a given game must be included in the lineup. The batter order shall be followed throughout the game

regardless of which players are on the field in the previous or upcoming inning. If a player arrives late, they shall be entered at the end of that game's batting order. If a player is injured or must leave early, their spot in the lineup will be skipped (no out recorded).

A player shall not be called out if they bat out of order. The skipped player shall be next up to bat, and the team shall resume following the same batting order.

### **Field positions**

A team may field up to ten players on defense (P, C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, 4 Outfielders).

A team may start a game even if the team does not have enough players to fill each defensive position. No team will be considered to have forfeited because they cannot field a minimum number of players. Instead, the games will be played using whatever number of players the team can field.

The pitcher's helper should be positioned immediately to the left or right of the coach that is operating the machine/delivering pitches.

The catcher will wear full protective gear. This includes league provided chest protectors, mask with dangling throat guard, leg guards, and right-handed throw catcher's mitt. Left-hand throwers may use their own glove. All boys must wear a protective athletic cup. A coach or parent volunteer shall assist the catcher in getting into their equipment to avoid delays. A coach/volunteer may also stand behind the catcher to retrieve dead balls.

All outfielders must be positioned on the outfield grass.

### **Starting and ending the game and scoring**

Coaches will adhere to home/away assignments (i.e., batting at the top and bottom of the inning) based on the published league schedule. Home team is in the 1<sup>st</sup> base dugout.

Coaches will make every effort to ensure that games start and finish on time. The managers of each team shall convene at home plate just preceding the established time to cover ground rules and any field or weather issues. A copy of the opposing team's batting order must be provided if requested.

As a courtesy, each manager should alert the other manager of any late players, early departures, or players being skipped in the lineup for injury. If the defensive team may need substitutes from the opposing team during any innings, the opposing team should provide the last player to bat in the previous half inning.

A game shall not exceed six innings or two hours. The bottom of the last inning will only be played if the home team is not ahead. No inning may begin with less than 15 minutes

left before the next game is about to start. For example, an inning may not begin at 3:16 if a 3:30 game is scheduled. An inning begins as soon as the last out is recorded in the previous inning.

Once an inning is started, it should be fully completed. If it cannot be completed, the score shall revert to what it was at the completion of the last full inning.

The exceptions to playing six innings are:

- Two hours elapse before six innings are played. If it appears likely after approximately 90 minutes that a six-inning game would run longer than two hours, the coaches shall agree after which inning the game will end.
- Game is called due to weather, darkness, or lightning/thunder.

Only low compression “Level 5” baseballs shall be used. CCLL will provide a starting amount of balls for each team. Other level balls such as cushioned tee balls or hard baseballs are not to be used.

It is the responsibility for the home team to set up equipment and away team to put away if no game or practice immediately follows (teams must be present at the conclusion of the game to not put away equipment).

### **Pitches, pitching machine, and the role of the coach-pitcher**

\*The rule regarding usage of the pitching machine has been modified for 2022 to promote speed/accuracy consistency throughout the division.

Pitches will primarily be delivered via a league-provided, spring-loaded pitching machine to be operated by a coach of the batting team. The league will provide guidance/training on proper operation of the machine. The intent of the league is for players to become progressively more comfortable and proficient at hitting balls delivered at appropriate velocity as delivered by the machine.

The home team is responsible for initial set-up of the machine.

The machine will be set up with its rear leg just in front of the 46’ pitcher’s plate. A ball bag should be kept behind—not to the side of—the machine.

For each at-bat, players are provided up to 7 strikes or near-strikes. Strikes and near strikes must be counted toward the 7 pitch limit even if the player does not swing, including the final pitch. (A player can strike out swinging or looking).

The coach must deliver at least the first 4 strikes/near-strikes via the machine. During the regular season, the final three strikes/near-strikes may be delivered by the machine or by coach pitch at the discretion of the coach with the goal of building hitting confidence and moving towards 100% machine utilization.

Coach-delivered pitches shall be delivered from an auxiliary pitcher’s plate installed

approximately 10' in front of the pitcher's plate/36' from home plate. Kneeling or crouching is permitted/encouraged (think Warrior II yoga pose). Underhand pitches are not allowed.

The coach-pitcher must attempt to avoid any hit balls and should not play a role in fielding, catching, or instruction to runners (maintains position on mound unless in line of play) after the ball is hit.

For local league playoffs, pitches shall be delivered only via the machine. Coach pitch shall not be used.

### **Batting**

The bat must be a baseball bat which meets the USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat) as adopted by Little League and must be stamped as such. USSSA-stamped bats and tee ball bats are prohibited. A bat shall not be more than 33 inches in length; not more than 2 5/8 inches in diameter, and if wood, not less than 15/16 inches in diameter (7/8 inch for bats less than 30") at its smallest part. Solid one-piece wood barrel bats do not require a USA Baseball stamp.

Bunting is not permitted. The batter must take a reasonably full swing at the ball. Any bunt or extremely short swings that intentionally have the same effect as a bunt shall count as a strike.

A pitch will not count towards the 7 if it is not close to being in the strike zone.

If the 7th and final pitch is a foul ball or foul tip, the batter is allowed a subsequent pitch. There is no limit to the amount of 7th pitch fouls allowed.

A ball that hits the pitching machine or the ball bag is considered a dead ball that results in one base for the batter and all runners.

A ball that hits the coach pitcher is a do-over.

A ball that reaches the track at Lafayette is an automatic homerun.

For safety reasons, no player may take 'on deck' practice swings.

A half-inning ends when the batting team has scored five runs or been put out three times. If the last batter drives in more than one run, only five runs will be counted.

### **Field Rules**

Base runners may not lead off or run before a ball has been hit. The offending runner must return to the original base.

After a hit, the play is over once the ball has been returned to either the coach/pitcher

or the pitcher's helper. A runner who is not at least halfway to a base when the play has ended must return to the previous base.

If the intent of the fielder is to return the ball to the coach/pitcher, but the ball is misplayed or misthrown, the play shall be over the same as if the pitcher caught the ball.

Runners may advance only one base on an overthrow.

### **Umpiring**

The A Division does not use umpires in the regular season. A neutral coach/league official may serve as umpire during select playoff games, but typically it is up to both team's coaches to facilitate the game.

The offensive team's manager shall appoint two adults to serve as first and third base coaches who shall be responsible for any decisions which involve judgment on their respective side of the field including, but not limited to, whether a batter ball is fair or foul or whether a runner is safe or out.

The manager shall appoint an adult to oversee the pitching machine ("pitcher") who shall be responsible for decisions which involve judgment, including, but not limited to, whether a pitch is a strike/near-strike that counts towards the 7-pitch limit or not, whether a batted ball around home plate is fair or foul, plays at 2nd base and home plate, and whether a runner is safe or out at any base if a base coach requests their assistance.

The manager may serve in any of these capacities.

Any call can be deferred to another coach (of either team) who had a better view of the play with the objective of coming to the right call in an agreeable manner.

All calls are final. No player, manager, or coach shall object to any such judgment decisions unless the managers from both teams agree a rule was misinterpreted or misapplied. There shall be no protests.

Managers should communicate to their coaches and parents that they should not shout "safe," "out," or anything similar unless they are in one of the above designated roles, nor should they say anything discouraging about calls or game play.

### **Safety rules**

There is no on deck circle in the A Division. Players may not swing a bat unless they are in the batter's box.

No head-first sliding except returning to a base.

If lightning is seen or thunder is heard, play must be stopped.

Teams must report injuries that require medical attention or first aid to the Safety Officer at [safety@capcityll.org](mailto:safety@capcityll.org). Teams must also report any potential violation of Little League or CCLL rules. Please be over-inclusive about what you report.

### **Special Games including Playoffs**

Special games are defined as non-regular season games.

Following the conclusion of the regular spring season, coaches may agree to participate in post-season special games. The Commissioner preferably should use a double-elimination or round robin format, as time allows, to create a playoff bracket. When not possible, a winners bracket/losers bracket/consolation game format should be used to guarantee all teams at least two postseason games for each team.

CCLL does not hold post-season games in the fall season.

### **Rain Procedures**

Play must be stopped for lightning and/or thunder.

CCLL will communicate notice of field closures due to rain and wet fields.

In the event of inclement weather where the city has not closed the field, the two coaches for a given game will decide, in consultation with the commissioner, whether their game is to be played two (2) hours before game-time.

### **Shed Combination**

Will send via email