

# **West Sugar Land Little League Handbook Part I: Ground Rules**



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## West Sugar Land Little League Divisions

West Sugar Land Little League offers the opportunity for players to be considered for a division that fits their age AND ability. Each Division has an expanded age bracket that overlaps the adjacent Divisions. All players are, by default, assigned to their Target Age division. Parents whose player might be ready for some higher skilled competition may select their child for consideration to participate in a higher Division. In this situation, the player must participate in the evaluations for both divisions.

Participating in an evaluation of a higher division does not guarantee the player will be drafted in the division. The player must be drafted by the end of the 5th round of the higher division to be eligible. The final decision will be up to the Managers, Division Commissioner, and League President.

A player who misses the evaluation for their division must receive approval to participate in the upcoming season by the League President and is only eligible to participate in their Target-Age Division.

Parents who feel their player could benefit from another year of development in a lower division may have their child participate in a player evaluation of a lower division as well.

The number of teams per division is determined by the number of players registered before the draft who participate in tryouts based on an 11-player maximum per team. Once the number of teams are created for a division and the maximum number of players are assigned per team, registration for that division is closed and all additional registrants are placed on a wait list.

Late registration: Late registrants shall try out before the board members. The Board, including the League President, Player Agent, and League Commissioner shall place the late registrant on a team based on the Late Registrant's skill Level. Late registration is defined as any player who registers after the draft is complete.

West Sugar Land Little League will make all efforts to anticipate the divisions available for the season by the time of evaluations. However, adjustments may be made to divisions after the evaluations to ensure a quality experience for all participants.

The following table highlights the division segments and the Target Age (#) and Eligible Age (\*) ranges:

League Age	Junior	Intermediate	Majors	Minors	MPAAA	MPAA	MPA	T-Ball
14	#							
13	#	#						
12	*	# **	# **					
11			#					
10			*	#				
9				#	*			
8				*	#	*		
7					#	#	*	
6						*	#	*
5							*	#
4								#

## General Ground Rules

- A) A manager may be suspended if the Ground Rules are not adhered to. If this happens, the manager is responsible for assigning one of the assistants the role of manager for any suspended game.
- B) Care of the equipment is mandatory. Managers who do not ensure proper treatment of the league facilities and equipment (including pitching machines) will be suspended for one game for the first offense, and for the rest of the season on the second offense.
- C) Run Limits (except Majors, Intermediates and Junior Divisions): Each team will be limited to 5 runs per inning in each of the first three (3) innings. Beginning in the top of the 4th inning, unlimited runs are allowed.
- D) Mercy Rule: Per Little League Rule 4.10(e): If after three (3) innings [Intermediate / Junior four (4) innings], one team has a lead of fifteen (15) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. If after three (4) innings [Intermediate / Junior four (5) innings], one team has a lead of ten (10) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent.
- E) No new inning shall start after 9:50PM Sunday through Thursday and 10:50PM Friday and Saturday per WSLLL contractual obligation with New Territory RCA.
- F) At the Board Member on Duty's discretion, if a parent, coach, manager or player acts in a way which is deemed inappropriate and contrary to the level of decorum expected under Little League Rules, that board member may remove that parent, coach, manager or player from a game. Cursing at an umpire, player or coach shall result in an automatic rejection from the game after an initial warning. If that same parent, coach, manager or player is removed from the game a second time, they shall not be allowed to attend any additional games that season. That person may appeal to the Board of Directors for West Sugar Land for reinstatement at the next board meeting, in which the Board may reinstate that person by a majority vote.

## 1. Junior League Division Ground Rules

- A) The Junior League Division is open to league ages 13 and 14 and league age 12 who are currently in the seventh grade. The League will decide if there are enough players at this age to form a viable division. Any seventh grade 12-year-old who wishes to play in the Junior Division must request a waiver from the WSLLL Board of Directors. Per Little League's rules, a 12-year-old Player who participates in the Junior League Division will automatically forfeit all eligibility to play in the Major Division including Major's All-Star team.
- B) WSLLL may elect to play inter-league play with other Little Leagues and thus develop ground rules outside this Handbook. If there is a conflict between this Handbook and inter-league play rules, the Handbook will supersede and rules regarding policy or procedures and the inter-league play rules will supersede rules regarding play as determined by the WSLLL Board of Directors.

## 2. Intermediate (50/70) Division Ground Rules

- A) The Intermediate League Division is open to League Age 11, 12, and 13-year-old players only. The Division may form if enough players show an interest in playing in this division.
- B) Per Regulation VII (h) of Little League, Intermediate games are scheduled for seven (7) innings and limited to a two (2) hour time limit per game.
  - i. Game Time may be shortened if other games are scheduled on the same field immediately following.
  - ii. Game Time for doubleheaders is 1 hour 50 minutes
- C) For safety considerations, metal spikes are NOT be allowed
- D) On deck batter may cross behind the plate to opposing on deck circle to batting side prior to attempt at bat. This must be accomplished before or between pitches.

### 3. Major League Division Ground Rules

- A) The Major League Division is open to players of league age 12, 11, or 10 only. All players of league age 11 will play in the Majors Division. League age 10 players desiring consideration for the Majors Division must participate in both Majors and Minors Division evaluations. Depending on number of players, the Majors Division may be divided into Majors and Varsity division.
- B) Majors games are scheduled for six (6) innings and will be limited to a two (2) hour time limit per game.
  - i. Game Time may be shortened if other games are scheduled on the same field immediately following.
  - ii. Game Time for doubleheaders will be 1 hour 40 minutes
- C) No new inning shall start one (1) hour and fifty (50) minutes after the start of the game.

### 4. Varsity League Division Ground Rules

- A) A Varsity Division may be formed from or combined with the Majors and Minors Divisions based on number of participants. The Varsity Division is open to league age 11, 10 and 9 players. League age 9 and 10 players desiring to be considered for Varsity Division are required to participate in both Majors and Minors Division evaluations.
- B) Length of play will be 1 hour 50 minutes.

## 5. Minor League Division Ground Rules

- A) The Minors League Division is open to players of league age of 8, 9 and 10. League age 8 players desiring consideration for the Minors Division are required to participate in both Minors and Machine Pitch Division evaluations.
- B) Length of play will be 1 hour 40 minutes.
- C) Minimum Infield Participation
  - i. Team roster of less than 12 players: All players are required to play 2 innings of infield for a game completing the 4th inning.
  - ii. Team roster with 12 or more players: all players are required to play 1 inning of infield by the end of the 3rd inning and 2 innings of infield for a game completing the 5th inning.
- D) The following Minors rules are for Fall season baseball only.
  - Pitching limitations for 10-year-old players shall be as follows:
    - i. Pitch count for ALL 10-year-old pitchers utilized in a single game may not exceed 80 pitches COMBINED.  
NOTE: Should a 10-year-old pitcher reach the 80th pitch while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch to the batter until that batter reaches base, is put out, or the third out is made to complete the half inning.
    - ii. Coaches are permitted to warm-up pitchers.
    - iii. Courtesy runners are allowed for incoming catchers provided there are two outs in the inning. The courtesy runner is the player with the last recorded out.
    - iv. All other pitching and pitcher rest requirements are stipulated in Regulation VI of the Little League Rule Book.

## 6. Machine Pitch Division AAA/AA Ground

- A) Machine Pitch AAA/AA divisions are instructional divisions open to players League Age 7 and 8. League Age 6 players desiring to be considered for MP-AAA/AA Divisions are required to participate in the Machine Pitch Division evaluation.
- B) If adequate players are available, the Machine Pitch Division may split into two divisions. Machine Pitch AAA Division (MP-AAA) will be open to players of league age 7 and 8. Machine Pitch AA Division (MP-AA) will be open to players of league age 6 and 7. For the split to occur, there must be enough players of each group to comprise at least 4 teams in each division. If those numbers cannot be reached, one MP-AAA/AA division will be formed.
- C) Before the game starts, each manager must provide the opposing team and the scorebook keeper with the lineup and the positions each player will play for 6 innings. If changes to the positions on the field are made, the opposing manger must be notified.
- D) No new inning may begin after 1 hour 30 minutes. A game ends when 6 innings are complete, or time runs out.
- E) No on-field batting practice with the machine is allowed prior to the game.
- F) Any batted ball that strikes the pitching machine, the cord or the coach feeding the pitching machine prior to being controlled by the defensive team is immediately called as a "dead ball".
- G) All base runners will be allowed to advance one base beyond the last base occupied at the time the ball became dead.
- H) The coach at the machine must make a good faith effort to get out of the way of a batted ball. If, in the umpire's judgment, he does not make such effort, he can be called for offensive interference in which case the batter will be called out and all runners will return to their original base.
- I) The home plate umpire will stop play when the momentum of the play has been stopped. The umpire will raise his hands, indicating that time is called. Pitcher control of the ball does not stop the play from continuing. Base runners may not advance once time has been called.
- J) Momentum of the play shall be stopped when the momentum of the lead runner is stopped, or once the pitcher has control of the baseball and has one foot inside the dirt on the pitching mound.
- K) If the runner advancing to the next base is past the halfway point between the bases, at the discretion of the umpire, at the time the pitcher has control of the ball and places at least one foot inside the dirt on the pitching mound, then that runner may continue to that base. If the runner is not past the halfway point between the bases at the time the pitcher has control of the ball and places on foot inside the dirt on the pitching mound, that runner shall return to the previous base.
- L) The Infield Fly Rule is suspended for the Machine Pitch division.
- M) Umpires - each team shall provide an umpire during games. The home team shall be responsible for providing the home plate umpire and the visiting team shall be responsible for providing the field umpire. WSLLL shall provide umpires during playoff and tournament games.



## OFFENSE

- A) Pitching machines shall always be operated by an adult only. The speed settings for each machine shall always remain constant during play. The machine will be set so the back leg is touching the front of the pitching rubber.
  - i. For the digital speed readout machine(s), the setting shall remain at 38 mph in the Fall and shall be set at 42 mph in the spring. If the MPAAA/AA division is split into two divisions of MPAAA and MPAA as described above, the speed for the MPAAA division shall be set at 42 mph and the speed for the MPAA division shall be set at 38 mph.
  - ii. With the permission of the home plate umpire, adjustments other than speed may be made at any time to the machine to compensate for wildness.
- B) Fake bunting (a batter showing bunt, then pulling back and swinging normally) is not allowed.
- C) The coach feeding the machine may coach the batter only prior to the delivery of the pitch when the ball is dead and not in play. Following delivery of the pitch, the coach feeding the machine is not allowed to coach a runner or the batter-runner. A first offense of this policy will result in a warning from the umpire and a second offense will result in the removal of the offending adult as the machine feeder.
- D) The coach feeding the machine may only place the ball in the chute delivering the baseball to the machine wheel (no pushing or spinning of the baseball is allowed upon delivery). A first offense of this policy will result in a warning from the umpire and a second offense will result in the removal of the offending adult as the machine feeder.
- E) There are no walks in the Machine Pitch Division. The batter hits until he/she either hits the ball into play or strikes out up to a maximum of Four (4) total pitches. Foul balls other than on the final pitch and balls not swung at count towards the total. If the final pitch is hit foul, the batter is entitled to another pitch
- F) At the umpire's discretion, any pitch is so wildly thrown by the machine that is deemed unhittable by the umpire and the batter does not swing, the umpire may call "No Pitch" grant another pitch. If the batter offers at the pitch, it will be a strike regardless of the pitch location.
- G) Runners may steal in innings 1 and 2 when the ball which travels into the area beyond the arc behind home plate and inside the extended foul lines. Once a ball passes into this area, runners may steal even if the ball's momentum then carries it outside of this area.
- H) A runner may steal bases under closed base rules in innings 3 through 6. A runner may steal once the ball has crossed the plate.
- I) Stealing of home is not allowed.
- J) Overthrows – a runner can only advance one base on an overthrow and will not advance any subsequent bases on any additional overthrows. However, if the runner is off the base and subsequently tagged on a play after an overthrow that runner shall be called out.
- K) If there are two outs, the offense must provide a courtesy runner for the incoming catcher of the next inning. The courtesy runner shall be the player recording the 2nd out of the inning.

## DEFENSE

- A) No player may sit out more than two defensive innings in a single game.
- B) Minimum Infield Participation
  - i. Team roster of less than 13 players: All players are required to play 2 innings of infield for a game completing the 4th inning.
  - ii. Team roster with 13 or more players: all players are required to play 1 inning of infield by the end of the 3rd inning and 2 innings of infield for a game completing the 5th inning.
- C) No player may play the same infield position for more than two innings in a single game.
- D) All players must play at least one defensive inning in the outfield or at catcher or sit out one defensive inning.
- E) Either three (3) or four (4) outfielders are acceptable. Outfielders must be positioned at least 15 feet behind the infield dirt.
- F) Infielders must be on the infield dirt until the ball reaches the plate unless the batter shows bunt. If the batter shows bunt, the first and third basemen may charge forward before the ball reaches the plate. In a season where MP is divided into AAA and AA Divisions, NO bunting is allowed in the MP-AA Division.
- G) The player assigned to the pitcher position must remain behind the pitching rubber with one foot on the pitching mound dirt until the ball reaches the plate.
- H) Player assigned to the defensive pitcher position must wear a helmet with faceguard. These are provided by the League.
- I) An outfield player may not make an unassisted force out in the infield. If an outfield player makes an unassisted force out in the infield, that runner is deemed safe.

## 7. Machine Pitch A Division Ground Rules

- A) The Machine Pitch A Division is purely an instructional league open to players of league age 6. League age 5 and league age 7 players are eligible on a case-by-case basis.
- B) The Home Team will provide an umpire to call outs on the bases and keep track of the number of pitches thrown for each batter. The team managers will enforce the rules. It is the responsibility of the team managers to know the rules and manage the game with good sportsmanship.
- C) The score may be kept each inning just to keep track of when a team reaches 5 runs in an inning, as 5 runs may be the maximum allowed in any inning. The Visiting Team may assign an "official" score keeper for each game. In this case, the score keeper shall notify the team managers when either team has reached 5 runs in any inning.
- D) Each team will bat until 3 outs are made or 5 runs are scored or everyone in the lineup has batted in an inning depending on the agreement of the coaches.
- E) No league standings are kept.
- F) No inning shall start after 1 hour 30 minutes. Any inning started will be completed unless it becomes too dark to play (as decided by team managers). A game ends when 6 innings are complete, or time runs out.
- G) Any batted ball that hits the coach operating the machine will result in a dead ball. The hitter will be awarded first base and each base runner may move up one base. The coach must try to get out of the way.
- H) A play is considered "dead" when
  - i. A ball hit beyond the 15-foot outfield arc is returned to the infield. Once the ball breaks the plane of the base path, it is considered in the infield. The ball does not have to be in the control of an infielder.
  - ii. A ball fielded in the infield is considered "dead" once the pitcher has control of the ball within the pitcher's circle.
- I) There is no Infield Fly Rule.

### Offense

- A) There are no walks in Machine Pitch A. The batter hits until he/she puts the ball into play, strikes out, fouls out (a foul ball caught in the air) or has reached the maximum of 5 pitches.
  - i. If a foul is hit (and not caught) on the 5th pitch, the hitter continues to bat until he/she strikes out, fouls out, puts the ball in play, or lets a pitch go by. If a hitter strikes out or lets the 5th pitch go by, the hitter gets up to two swings off a tee.
  - ii. After two unsuccessful swings, the hitter will be out. The hitter will be out even if the 2nd swing off the tee results in a foul ball.
- B) Bunting or fake bunting is not permitted in Machine Pitch A.
- C) Base stealing is not permitted in Machine Pitch A.
- D) Base runners may advance no more than one base on an overthrown ball.
- E) Each team will pitch to their team. Only approved managers and/or coaches may pitch. The coach pitching may coach the hitter.
- F) Coaches cannot provide any physical help to any base runner.

## DEFENSE

- A) All players shall play a defensive position each inning. Six (6) players play in the infield each inning: pitcher position, catcher, 1st base, 2nd base, SS, and 3rd base. All others play in the outfield.
- B) Each player shall play at least one inning at an infield position, and at least one inning at an outfield position or at catcher in each game. No player will play pitcher or first base more than one inning a game.
- C) Outfielders must be positioned behind the outfield arc, approximately 15 ft. behind the base line and must remain behind this arc during play. Outfielders may not come into the infield to make a play.
- D) Infielders, except the pitcher and catcher, must be on the infield dirt until the ball reaches the plate.
- E) The player assigned to the pitcher position must stay behind the pitching rubber and have at least one foot in the dirt pitching circle.
- F) Defensive coaches are positioned as follows: two (2) coaches behind the outfield arc. All other Coaches must remain in the dugout.
- G) Coaches cannot provide any physical help to any defensive player.
- H) Player assigned to the defensive pitcher position must wear a helmet with faceguard. These are provided by the League.

## 8. T-Ball Division Ground Rules

- A) The T-Ball Division is purely an instructional division and is limited to league-age 5 and 4, and possibly league age 6 on case by case basis.
- B) Each team will provide an umpire to call outs on the bases and keep track number of swings or pitches thrown for each batter. The team managers will enforce the rules. It is the responsibility of the team managers to know the rules and manage the game with good sportsmanship.
- C) There is no official score kept during T-Ball games. No league standings (wins- losses) will be kept in the T-Ball Division. A scorebook may be kept tracking position in the batting order each inning.
- D) No inning shall start after 1 hour 30 minutes and no more than 3 innings will be played. Any inning started will be completed.
- E) A play is considered "dead" when:
  - i. A ball hit beyond the outfield arc is returned to the infield. Once the ball breaks the plane of the base path, it is considered in the infield. The ball does not have to be in the control of an infielder.
  - ii. A ball fielded in the infield is considered "dead" once the pitcher has control of the ball within the pitcher's circle.

### OFFENSE

- A) Each team bats its entire line-up each inning regardless of the number of outs made.
- B) Each batter gets five (5) swings to hit off the tee. If they do not put the ball in play or foul-off on the fifth swing, they will be declared out and must return to the dugout. If the batter fouls-off the fifth swing, the batter will be awarded an additional swing.
- C) A foul ball is any ball hit outside the foul lines between home plate and either first or third base or any ball that does not go beyond the dirt of the batting area.
- D) Bunting is not permitted in T-Ball.
- E) Base runners may advance no more than one base on all overthrown balls.
- F) Three (3) Offense Coaches are allowed on the field and are positioned in the 1st and 3rd base coach boxes as well as a Hitting Coach at home plate or pitcher's mound to assist the batter.
- G) Coaches may not physically assist any base runner. Coaches are allowed only to provide verbal instruction.

### DEFENSE

- A) All players shall play a defensive position each inning. A maximum of seven players, including the catcher, may play in the infield, at one time.
- B) Each player will play at least 1 innings at an infield position each game.
- C) Outfielders must be positioned behind the outfield arc, approximately 15 ft behind the base line and must remain behind this arc during play. Outfielders may not come into the infield to make a play.
- D) Infielders except the pitcher and catcher must be on the infield dirt until the ball is hit.
- E) No player may play the positions of pitcher or first base for more than one inning per game.

- F) Two (2) Defense Coaches are allowed on the field and will be positioned behind the outfield arc.
- G) Coaches may not physically assist any defensive player. Coaches are allowed only to provide verbal instruction.

## APPENDIX I – Pitching FAQs

### How many warm up pitches are allowed?

LL rule 8.03, a maximum of eight (8) pitches, at the beginning of any inning, are allowed if the pitches shall not consume more than one minute of time. If a sudden emergency causes a pitcher change without any opportunity to warm up, the umpire-in-chief shall allow the pitcher as many pitches as the umpire deems necessary.

### Who can warm up a Pitcher?

Once the game begins, a manager or coach (adult) may not warm-up the pitcher per LL rule 3.09. LL rule 1.17 states warm-up catcher must wear the required protective cup (male only) and catcher's mask with the dangling type throat protector and catcher's helmet. This applies to both infield and outfield (bullpen) warm-ups. In the fall season, WSLLL allows for coaches to warm-up pitchers and designated runners for catchers with two out.

### What is a Pitcher's maximum pitch count?

LL Regulation VI states that the manager must remove a pitcher when said pitcher reaches the limit for their age group. If the pitcher reaches the limit while facing a batter they may finish the at bat. They may also remain in the game. Furthermore, any pitcher that throws 41 or more pitches cannot play catcher.

League Age Group	Pitches Per Day
13-16	95
11-12	85
9-10	75
8	50

### Additional Clarification on Pitch Count / Days Rest:

Player "A" pitches "#" pitches on Saturday. Player "A" is eligible to pitch again on:

# Pitches	Days Rest	Rest Days	Eligible to Pitch on
1 – 20	0	-	Sunday
21 – 35	1	Sunday	Monday
36 – 50	2	Sunday, Monday	Tuesday
51 – 65	3	Sun, Mon, Tues	Wednesday
66 +	4	Sun, Mon, Tues, Wed	Thursday