

# JCLL Co-op Pony League Baseball Rules for 2025

## Conduct

**ZERO TOLERANCE RULE IN EFFECT:** Coaches are expected to lead by example and to behave in a proper manner. Bad behavior will result in a two-week suspension and possibly removal for the rest of the season. Bad behavior by the fans will result in having them asked to leave the field area. Failure to do so will result in police being called and having them removed. Coaches, leave the umpires alone and keep your fans in check. Everyone benefits from good sportsmanship.

## Equipment, uniforms, and safety

1. No metal cleats or spikes are allowed.
2. Communities will determine on their home fields if on deck batter will be allowed. Coaches and umps will be informed prior to each game if an on-deck batter will be allowed. Posting at the field is recommended. On-deck batters should always be to the back of the active batter.
3. Catchers must wear required gear before they assume the position. All individuals warming up the pitcher under the age of 18 must wear a legal face mask/helmet combination.
4. All batters and base runners must wear legal batting helmets. Anyone coaching bases under the age of 18 must wear a legal batting helmet.
5. Malicious contact by defense or offense will result in player ejection. Offensive or defensive players cannot run through their opponent.
6. Bats can't be longer than 34" and barrel of the bat must be 2-5/8" or smaller. If the bat is wood, it must have a handle width of 7/8" thickness if under 30" in length and it must be of a 15/16" thickness if it is more than 30" long. All bats must meet the USA Bat performance standard and have a USA Baseball stamp on them. BBCOR bats meeting the legal bat specifications are acceptable. No USSSA Bats.
7. Team warning for throwing equipment or showing unsportsmanlike behavior for the 1st offense. The 2nd such incident will result in the offender being ejected, whether a player or coach.

## The Game

### General

Jackson County Little League is associated with the larger Little League organization. The rules below are important callouts and/or modifications of the full ruleset (Jr./Sr./Big League division). The full ruleset can be found at: <https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/rules-regulations-policies/> or by downloading the official "Little League Rulebook" app on your mobile device.

1. Batter/runner may advance on a dropped 3rd strike, called or swung at, if first base is open at the time of the pitch or if there are 2 outs. A batter's motion on a dropped 3rd strike must be to first base or they shall be called out.
2. Teams will play with 9 players defensively. All players must play at least 6 defensive outs.
3. Coaches, teach your player how to play defense without being in the baseline. This will help in avoiding obstruction by the players not fielding the ball. Base runners should not have to go around defensive players that do not have the ball. Likewise, base runners can't run and make contact with the defensive player; this would result in interference being called. Defense has a clear path in trying to make a play on the ball. Interference can be verbal or physical action by the defense. Defensive players cannot block any base if they do not have the ball. This would be obstruction, and it would allow the runner to be called safe if contact is made.
4. Both teams are encouraged to keep scorebooks for both teams.

## Time

### 1. **When there is a single game scheduled:**

Games shall be 1 hour 30 minutes in length or 7 innings; whichever comes first. No new inning will start after 1 hour 30 minutes. When an inning begins within listed timeframes, it may be finished.

### **When there are back-to-back games scheduled:**

Games shall be 1 hour 30 minutes in length or 6 innings; whichever comes first. No new inning will start after 1 hour 30 minutes. There will be a hard-stop after 1 hour 45 minutes. (~7:45 and 9:45) If an inning was incomplete at the hard stop, the results of that partial inning are nullified, and the score from the previous inning is final. It is imperative that games begin on time, and that teams get on and off the field as efficiently as possible. This hard stop was put into place to prevent the second game from getting too late and conflicting with city ordinances.

2. Double headers, if scheduled, will be (2) two (5) five inning games.
3. Teams must have players available for play within 10 minutes of scheduled game time. If not enough players are present, the game is forfeited. Teams may still scrimmage for the remainder of their scheduled playing time. If playing with 8 players only, an automatic out will be recorded every time the 9th batter position would come to bat. Players brought up from another league cannot pitch or catch.
4. Any time after 1 out has been recorded a courtesy runner may be used for the catcher. The courtesy runner will be the person that was the last recorded out. With 2 outs it is recommended that a courtesy runner be used for the catcher. Coaches, please assist in warming up the pitcher if the catcher isn't ready. This will help move the game along.
5. Get pitchers and catchers on the field ASAP... this will help with getting as many innings in as possible.
6. 10 run cap per half inning. There is no limit on runs in the last inning. In order to be considered the last inning (based on time limit), the umpire would need to clearly announce it to both coaches prior to the start of the inning. If it is not announced, the 10 run cap is in effect.
7. Run rule: 15 after 3 innings, 10 after 4, and 8 after 5.

## Base running

1. Lead-off rules:
  - a. 70' - 75' Bases: No leading off base until ball leaves pitchers hand.  
1st offense for leading off early is a warning, 2nd offense - player is out.
  - b. 80' Bases: Lead-offs for 80' basepaths are the same 'live-ball' rules as 90' basepaths — the runner is never held to the base before the pitch and may lead-off at any time
  - c. 90' Bases: High School Federation Rules apply.
2. Coaches take the time to go over the balk rules with your pitchers. All coaches should show some patience with umpires in learning the rules. It will take time and there is no Trophy for 1st Place, so relax, teach and have fun. Remember, this is just a game.

## Pitching

1. Pitching distances (measured from back of home plate to front of pitching rubber):
  - a. 70' bases = 54 feet
  - b. 75' bases = 55 feet 6"
  - c. 80' bases = 55 feet 6"
  - d. 90' bases = 60 feet 6"
2. Pitching rule in effect as stated in Little League Rule Book. We will use the mandated Little League "Pitch Count Rule". Pitchers may pitch up to 4 innings per game or throw only 95 pitches (whichever comes first). If a pitcher pitches 41 or more pitches, they cannot go to the catcher position when replaced. If a catcher catches 4 innings or more, they cannot go to the pitcher position. One pitch into an inning is considered an inning pitched or an inning caught. Both teams should keep track of pitch counts. This is for the safety of the kids pitching.

3. Pitchers warming up will get 8 pitches before the first inning and 5 pitches between innings. New pitchers, whether starting a new inning or in mid-inning relief, get 7 warmup pitches. Additionally, if a coach comes out to catch warmups while a catcher gets ready, those count toward that warmup count. If nobody comes to warm up the pitcher and everybody is just waiting around, the chief umpire reserves the right to reduce or waive warmup pitches, depending on the time spent waiting. Umpires will have a big emphasis on these items this year to try to keep games moving at a faster pace.
4. Pitchers have re-entry rights like all other players.
5. If pitcher is ambidextrous, they must commit to one side only to a batter until batter is out or reaches base.
6. Teams are encouraged to pitch more than one player, especially on double header dates.

## Consequences for major equipment violations

If illegal equipment (metal spikes or illegal bat) is discovered after the player has taken one pitch or reached base, they are immediately OUT. The umpire then reserves the right to issue a warning to the player and bench, or to enact the penalty for a major illegal equipment violation. This penalty is automatic ejection of the offending player and the head coach for the remainder of the game. It is the responsibility of the head coach to ensure that all equipment that makes it onto the field is legal and safe. They are accountable and that is why they are also included in the ejection. If a warning is issued at any level and that team has a subsequent violation, ejections are automatic. No second warnings.

