



AA Division Philosophy

This Division is an introduction to many aspects of “real” baseball with a focus on learning the fundamental rules and techniques of the game. A pitching machine is used by the coach to throw to batters. Games and practices generally take place at West Field with some games later in the season at Crocker Field. Playoff games may also be played on the Minors field at district based on field availability. At the start of the season there are two practices (one Sunday and one during the week). Half way into the season this will shift and there will be one practice a week (Sunday) one weekday game and one Saturday game.

Prior to the Score Being Kept

Players begin the season without keeping score where everyone bats through the line-up in each inning. Coaches will pitch to each player with a maximum of 5 pitches. After the fifth pitch and an unsuccessful batting attempt, the player will return to the bench and the next player will bat. Neither outs nor runs are recorded during this part of the season. The focus is on getting comfortable with the rules, the mechanics and the flow of the game.

AAA Rules for Regular Season Scoring and Playoffs

Halfway into the season, at a date set by the division director, the score will start being kept (though not recorded on the website until the playoffs) and outs will be recorded. The goal of this is to complete the transition to real baseball and prepare the kids for both the playoffs and AAA baseball in a future season. Kid umpires are not used in the regular season. Umpires will be assigned for playoff games. It is up to the managers to mutually agree on calls and maintain sportsmanship at all times for the sake of the kids.

The following rules apply to the playoffs and regular season once score keeping is enabled.

1. Game Length

Games are **5 innings** in length, but an inning starting after 1 hour and 20 minutes from the beginning of the game will be considered the last inning. The scheduled start time of each game will be considered the official start time for calculating 1hr and 20min.

2. Batting

Strict 5-pitch maximum, regardless of good/bad pitches, unless it is a foul on the final pitch, which entitles the hitter to one more pitch. Batters are OUT and an OUT is recorded after the final pitch. It could be 8+ pitches if



they foul off 4+ in a row. The 5 pitches are to allow for occasional bad pitches by the machine, and to eliminate discretion on good/bad pitches.

AA will be a continuous batting order division. This eliminates the availability of special pinch runners. All players (e.g., 1 to 11 or 1 to 12) will bat, whether they are playing in the field or not. Unbalanced teams (e.g. 11 players vs. 9 players) won't be an issue for batting because we are using a 5-run limit instead of batting once through the order. (See Rule 7 below.) The stopping point of an inning will be only the 5th run or 3 outs, not the number of batters who have batted in the inning. If neither of those has happened and you have cycled all the way through your order, then start again at the beginning of your order and keep playing the inning until 3 outs are made or the 5th run is scored.

No bunts are permitted. If a player bunts, the result is a dead ball. The player gets one warning and the pitch is not counted. If the player attempts to bunt again, at any point in the game, they are out if the ball is put in play. If the ball is not put in play, it simply counts as a pitch.

3. Base Running

Base runners may not leave a base until the ball is hit. If a runner leaves before contact is made **and an attempted play is made on that runner (force out or tag out)**, the umpires/coaches can call the player out at their discretion if they believe the outcome may have been impacted. If no attempted play is made, but the runner left early, the umpire should send runners back to the most likely bases that they would have reached without leaving early.

Once the ball is in the vicinity of the pitching mound/machine and is either caught by the pitcher or passes the point where it should have been caught, the play stops. A runner who is not more than half way to a base at the time the ball either arrives at or passes the pitcher shall return to the previous base. In the event that the pitcher picks up a ball on the ground that has not been thrown, then he/she must hold the ball to stop the play (i.e. if they field the ball and intend to make a play, the play does not stop). If the ball is in play in the field, you can continue to run until it goes to / near the pitching mound/machine.

If an overthrow is made at first or third and the ball goes past the dugout fence line, it is a dead ball and the baserunners are awarded the next base. If the ball remains in play on an initial overthrow to first base or third base, the runners (at their own risk) may only advance a maximum of 1 additional base as long as the defense immediately attempts to return the ball to the pitcher's mound per rule #4. If the ball remains in play on an initial overthrow and the defensive attempts to make a play on any advancing runner instead of returning the ball to the mound, the subsequent throw is subject to additional overthrow penalties. If an overthrow is made at second base or home, it is considered a live ball and play does not stop until it is in the vicinity of the pitcher.

FYI, runners rounding 1st base – unless the runner attempts to go to 2nd base, the runner can round the base into fair territory without being tagged out. See Little League Rule 7.08(c).

If the ball hits the machine, ball bag/bucket, or the coach operating the machine, dead ball single. All base runners advance one base but the play is dead.



4. Fielding

Every player must play at least 1 inning in the infield before the end of the third inning. No player may play all four innings in the infield. No player can sit out more than 1 inning / all players must play at least 3 innings (out of the 4 innings). We strongly encourage managers to rotate kids around the field and play them MORE than 1 inning in the infield at this level. The focus should be on the broad development of the players skills.

The outfielders should not be positioned as back-up infielders before the ball has been hit. They should be at least 5 yards behind the base paths, though we won't be measuring, marking or enforcing this. A simple way to explain this – an outfielder should generally throw the ball to an infielder at the base to make an out. We do not want to see the Center Fielder repeatedly playing back-up 2nd , fielding a groundball and recording a force out by running to the bag, or playing 'rover,' positioned directly behind the bag. We can live with letting the kid run and touch the base as long as he/she is positioned correctly at the beginning of the play. We recognize it will be tough to enforce, but the idea is that as long as he's/she's not standing in the vicinity of the base before the ball is hit, then let the play happen naturally OF positions are: LF, LC, RC, RF and that absolutely NO rovers (i.e., kid standing 5 ft behind 2B) are allowed.

Due to teams having uneven numbers on defensive, at most 10 players can play on defense each inning. Four outfielders plus six infielders. If you only have 9, you may play with 3 outfielders. This means many players may only play 3 innings if you have 11 to 13 players at your game. All players must play at least 3 innings (i.e., player can only sit out max 1 inning) of the first 4 innings.

We'd like coaches to share roster cards with the opposing team to ensure they abide by this, as we know it has been a contentious issue in previous years. Last minute changes due to a missing player are fine so long as managers follow the rule and let the other team know. Prepare a 5-inning line-up with field positions in advance.

5. Mercy Rule

As provided by **Rule 4.10(e)**, HLL will adopt a mercy rule for the AA division. If there is a differential of ten (10) runs or more after four (4) innings of play [3.5 innings if the home team is ahead], the game is final.

Teams may choose to continue to play out the remaining innings as a 'scrimmage,' but official scoring will not continue after the game is official.



6. Infield Fly Rule

The Infield Fly Rule is not enforced in the AA Division. All fly balls in the infield are considered live balls.

7. 5-Run Rule

Rule 5.01, there is a 5-run max per team per inning.

Pursuant to **Rule 5.07**, HLL waives the 5-run rule for both teams in the last inning, when the last inning is the fifth inning or another inning determined by time limit (for example, the 5-run limit is not modified if the game is shortened by weather or darkness.)

8. Ties

Ties are permitted in the regular season. AA teams are not permitted to continue playing beyond 5 innings in order to break the tie. All games during the post-season tournament must be completed and may not end in a tie. Therefore, in the event of a tie at the end of a regulation 5-inning tournament game, teams will play extra innings in order to determine a winner. The time limit is also suspended in situations where there is a tie during a playoff game and the game would otherwise be ended.

9. Sportsmanship

In accordance with the HLL Player Contract, all Managers, Coaches, players, and spectators are to show good sportsmanship and proper conduct at all times. No one except a Manager is allowed to speak with the Umpires during a game. *Arguing or attempting to influence umpire decisions is specifically prohibited and will not be tolerated.*

10. Game Set-up Responsibilities

The home team uses the 3rd base bench and the visiting team uses the 1st base bench. The home team removes bases from the equipment box and installs the bases on the field of play. Each team uses their own game balls to pitch.

11. Speakers, Music, Walk-up Songs Prohibited

Coaches, players, and spectators are prohibited from using a speaker to play any music during games.



12. HLL Code of Conduct and Zero Tolerance Policy

A. Policy Regarding Proper Communications with Umpires

All persons associated with the team, including players, managers, coaches and spectators, shall support the umpires. **No one** is to address the umpire during the game with the following exceptions:

1. Managers or players responding to the umpire who addresses him or her,
2. Managers making substitutions,
3. Managers, coaches, players or spectators pointing out emergencies or safety issues.
4. Managers asking for a rule interpretation.

Rule Interpretation Process: A Manager may ask an umpire in a polite and constructive way to explain a rule and its application to the preceding play. In such an instance, the following procedure must be followed: (1) the Manager asks for time to be out; (2) the Plate Umpire indicates that time is out and the play is dead (a field umpire cannot indicate time is out); (3) the Manager may then approach the Plate Umpire and ask for a rule interpretation on the prior play; (4) if the umpire is unfamiliar with or disagrees with the Manager's rule interpretation, the Manager must present a copy of the rule; and (5) it is then the Plate Umpire's discretion whether to change a call on the field. If a copy of the rule is not presented, the appeal could be denied outright.

HLL does not permit a Manager to request that youth umpires review a play call to determine if another youth umpire saw the play differently then the call on the field. Doing so could be considered an **infraction** of these rules.

Absolutely no demonstrative behavior, sarcasm, harassment or intimidation by managers, coaches, players, parents or spectators will be tolerated. Any such behavior will be considered an unsportsmanlike **infraction** subject to the procedure outlined below in (B).

Player behavior is also regulated by the **HLL Player Contract**, to which all Managers and Players have agreed. Under the heading Player Conduct & Enforcement, players are not allowed to throw or kick a bat, helmet, or any equipment in anger (on the field or in the dugout). Players are not allowed to bully or threaten other players or purposely do things that might injure another player.

If an Umpire should (1) observe any Player behave in such a way towards another player or (2) observe or hear a player throw, kick or otherwise mistreat equipment or field fixtures in anger, the behavior will be considered an unsportsmanlike **infraction** subject to the procedure outlined below in (B).

B. Procedure for Enforcement of Unsportsmanlike Infractions

If an Umpire believes an **infraction** has occurred, then the following warnings and penalties may be applied to the offending team. (1) In the Umpire's discretion, the Umpire may provide a warning to the offending team, player, manager, coach or spectator. Any warning must be clear, verbal and acknowledged by the offending party. However, HLL has a zero tolerance policy regarding unsportsmanlike conduct. As a result, (2) the Umpire has discretion to remove the offending individual from the game and field without a warning, if the conduct is egregious. "Egregious" conduct includes, but is not limited to, the use of profanity, behavior resulting in injury (even if unintended), behavior resulting in the unpermitted touching of another person, or conduct that otherwise impedes the orderly process of the game.



Umpire rulings on unsportsmanlike infractions are final and not subject to protest or appeal. The very nature of sportsmanship is subjective, and therefore some inconsistency is unavoidable. Assessing penalties and ejections are a last resort, and the League objective is to have all Managers, Coaches, and Players behave in a sportsmanlike manner where no penalties are required. Any unsportsmanlike infraction, whether it results in a warning or ejection, identified by an Umpire must be reported to the Umpire Director and the Player Agent immediately following the game.

If a Manager or Coach is ejected from a game, he/she will also be suspended for the team's next game as well. The HLL Board retains discretion to enforce these actions as well as the authority to administer other disciplinary actions as it deems necessary.

If a Player is ejected from a game more than once, the Player will become ineligible to compete in the HLL Division tournament or to be selected for a HLL postseason all-star team. The Player and Players parents are allowed to, and encouraged to meet with the HLL Competition Committee to apologize for the infractions, demonstrate awareness of why certain behavior is not acceptable, and what steps the Player and Player's parents will take to ensure such behaviors will not occur again. In the Competition Committee's sole discretion, the Player's eligibility for HLL Division tournament and HLL postseason all-star teams may be reinstated..

13. Division Championship and Post-Season Playoff

For post-season play, all teams in the AA Division will be seeded for the post-season double elimination tournament. The division director will seed the teams based on his/her discretion with the objective of balancing the chances for each team to proceed in their first game equally. This is part art and past science. The decision for seeding by the division director will be final.

14. Other AA Local Rules

At most, two coaches from the defensive team may stand in the outfield to help coach their team

For all regular season games and playoff games where no umpires are available, the coach running the pitching machine will be the umpire. All calls by the pitching coach are final and not subject to argument or objection.

After each playoff game – the Winning team should email Division Director aa-div@hllbaseball.org



APPENDIX A: Umpire Guidelines

Main umpire responsibilities:

- Call safe/out at the bases, including home.
 - Field 1 Ump has all 1B calls.
 - Field 2 Ump has calls at 2B and 3B. Plays at the plate need to be covered by Field 2 ump with assistance from Field 1. Plays at the plate may be difficult to see so both field umpires should get together to confirm a call if there is a close play at the plate
- Determining fair or foul. Field Ump 1 has the 1B line, Field Ump 2 has the 3B line.
 - Outside of the grass cutout is the foul line at West, the dirt is completely in fair territory. Chalk line used at Crocker or Minors.
 - With runners on, Field 2 Ump has to do their best to determine foul balls down the 3rd base line since you will be positioned off the 3rd base line.
- Determining that a play has stopped when the ball has been returned to the vicinity of the pitchers mound
 - Teams must throw the ball to a fielder standing in the mound area. If there is no player standing close to the mound and the ball is thrown in that direction, it does NOT stop play. A player must be there to attempt to catch the ball.
 - The player does NOT have to catch the ball. All throws with reasonable intent to return the ball to the mound will count in stopping a play. High throws or rolling/bouncing balls to the mound will stop the play. Use your best judgement in determining if the play was stopped. There may be a circle drawn on the field to help you identify the mound area.
 - Any fielder, including outfielders, can throw the ball to the pitcher to stop a play.
 - Once play is stopped, it is the responsibility of the umpires to determine if the runners are more than halfway to the next base. There should be a halfway line painted on the field to help you. If the play is stopped and the runners have not reached the halfway marker, they must return to the previous base. Please discuss with the other umpire if you need help with determining if any runner reached the halfway point before the play was stopped.
- Calling balls out of play
 - If a ball goes past the imaginary fence line, put your hands up in the air and call a dead ball out of play. All runners will be awarded next base.
- Umpires are NOT responsible to keep score. The coaches/teams are responsible for tracking all runs. Max 6 runs per inning mercy rule.
- Only the team managers are allowed to speak to the umpires. Please hold a pregame plate meeting to introduce yourself. If any of the other coaches talks to you, politely tell them that you are only allowed to talk with the managers.
- If an illegal non USA bat is identified, please have it removed from the game and warn both managers about the illegal bat. If the illegal bat is used in the game, it will be an automatic out for that hitter.



- If a hitter throws a bat, issue the offending team a warning. If anyone on the team throws a bat after the warning has been issued, the hitter will be called out.
- Umpires do not track the amount of pitches per rule. The coaches will determine if the batter has reached the 5 pitch maximum.
- If there is a close play and you need help or did not get a good view of the play, please get together with the other umpire to come to a mutual decision. The managers should not be directing you to get together and you are not required to do so if they request it. All calls are final and not subject to review. Only a rule clarification may be discussed with the managers.
- If there is only 1 umpire assigned to the game, please take the Field 1 position. The pitching coach operator will act as Field 2 umpire and help make calls at 2B, 3B, home and fair or foul on the 3B line.
- For many of the playoff games, a 3rd umpire game monitor will be assigned. The game monitor will be there to assist you on rules and engage with the managers. While there to support you, they will have final say and ability to override any call on the field as they deem fit. The umpire monitor will be an experienced umpire usually in high school or an adult.

APPENDIX B: 5 Inning Line-Up Card

Team _____

		Position				
Player	Inning 1	Inning 2	Inning 3	Inning 4	Inning 5	
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						