

# Sunnyvale Little League

## Farm Division Rules

Last modified 2/13/17

### 1. Guidelines

- 1) The purpose of Little League Baseball at the Farm Division is to achieve the following:
  - a) Introduce pitching by players and hitting from player pitchers.
  - b) Develop the concepts of team play and sportsmanship.
  - c) Develop the skills of all players to enable them to play at higher Little League levels.
  - d) Make it fun, so players will want to continue to play baseball.
  
- 2) To help achieve these goals Sunnyvale Little League will do the following:
  - a) Strive to provide experienced, enthusiastic managers and coaches who will place learning and development of players over winning or game scores.
  - b) Provide training and clinics to managers, coaches, and players.
  - c) Measure the success of this level by the improvement of the players over the course of the season; the excitement and enthusiasm of the players and their families; and the number of players who return to play at higher levels.
  - d) Will not keep standings.
  
- 3) The Lower Division Player Agent will manage the Farm Division and:
  - a) Serves as the contact for managers to Sunnyvale Little League's board of directors.
  - b) Will address issues arising from players, managers, or parents that cannot be resolved at the manager level.
  - c) Will elevate issues to the President of Sunnyvale Little League, if cannot be resolved.

### 2. Team Formation

- 1) Players are assigned to teams by the Lower Division Player Agent. There are no tryouts for the Farm Division, however player evaluations may be held to let the player agents and managers assess the skill level in order to form balanced teams.
  
- 2) Players may request to be on a certain team with a certain player, manager, or coach. Reasonable accommodations will be made by the Lower Division Player Agent to honor these requests, but there is no guarantee that a request will be granted.
  
- 3) The player agent will make every effort to achieve the following:
  - a) Ensure that the assignment of players is as equal as possible in terms of age, grade level, and experience.

- b) Ensure that a player is not isolated by school (i.e., only single player from a school).
- 4) Disputes concerning team assignments will be resolved by the league president and the player agent.

### **3. Rules of Play**

- 1) The regular season playing rules for this division are as described in the Official Regulations and Playing Rules of Little League Baseball for the current year.
- 2) If a youth umpire is NOT assigned for the game, the manager and coaches will umpire. Balls and strikes are called from behind the pitcher's rubber by the defensive manager/coach. Base coaches will assist with rulings at the bases.
- 3) The following options and additional rules shall be observed:
  - a) Offense
    - i) Rule 4.04, the option for continuous batting order, is observed in this division.
    - ii) Players who arrive late must be added to the end of the batting order unless they arrive before their scheduled place in the batting order.
    - iii) A batter hit by a pitch by a player has the option to take first base or to remain at-bat. If the Player elects to continue the at-bat, he/she retains the same ball-strike count. The batter is not awarded 1st base if hit by the adult pitcher.
    - iv) Lead offs and base stealing are not allowed. The ball is dead unless hit by the batter. Base runners must wait for contact before leaving the base.
    - v) The infield fly rule is not in effect.
    - vi) Players may only pick up a bat when it is their turn to hit and must wear a helmet whenever they hold a bat. There is no "on deck" area and no warm-up swings are allowed until it is their turn to hit and they are near the batter's box area.
  - b) Mandatory Play Defense - No player may "Sit out" more than two innings per game on defense.
    - i) Note: To "Sit out" means being in the dugout during the half inning when the team is on defense. A player who arrives late while the team is on defense is not considered to sit out that half inning. Neither is a player who becomes ill or injured and removed from the field during that half inning.
    - ii) Managers must be diligent in assuring that they rotate the players on their roster that sit out two innings from game to game.
    - iii) Farm Level requires teams with 10 or more players to play 4 outfielders. Outfielders must play at least 15 feet behind the edge of the grass.
    - iv) Manager must rotate players between infield and outfield positions so that each player has equal time playing infield over the course of the season.

c) Substitutions

- i) Free substitution of players into the game is permitted at the half inning. Substitution during an inning is not permitted except for injury, disciplinary reasons, or other similar issue.
- ii) Players on the field may switch defensive positions during an inning (i.e., from 1st base to 2nd base). Once a player leaves the pitcher position, however, he may not return to the pitching position.
- iii) No defensive player may play the same position for more than 2 innings. This includes pitchers and catchers.

d) Inning Limitations

- i) The team at bat shall be retired after one of the following events occurs: Three (3) outs are made; Five (5) runs are scored in the half inning.

e) Pitching

- i) The Farm Division uses a combination of coach and player pitching. The intent is to give players early training in pitching fundamentals.
- ii) The pitching rubber will be 40 feet from home plate vs. standard Little League pitching distance of 46 feet.
- iii) During the first ## games, the coaches pitch to their own players. ( The number of games will be determined by the Player Agent in consultation with the Instructional Coordinator). Managers may agree to begin player pitching during this period if players on both teams are ready to pitch. At the latest, player pitching shall begin immediately following the spring break.
- iv) During coach pitch there will be no walks. The batter will receive SIX (6) pitches to either strike out or put the ball in play. Strikes will be called and strikeouts may occur ( by youth umpire or coach ) The at-bat shall not end on a foul ball. The coach should attempt to throw a flat pitch. The goal is to match the speed of the pitching that the players will see during player pitch.
- v) When a coach is pitching, the defensive player pitcher is positioned to either side with one foot on the mound. The player must be positioned behind the coach pitcher.
- vi) The ball is declared dead if it hits or is caught by the coach pitcher. The batter receives a hit and all runners advance one base. If the umpire determines that the coach pitcher interfered with the ball intentionally, the ball is dead, the batter is out and the runners shall not advance.
- vii) There will be no walks either from player or adult pitching. After ball 4 is reached by the player-pitcher, an adult pitcher for the batting team will pitch to the batter until the at-bat is completed. The strike count will be retained when the adult pitcher begins. The player-pitcher will resume pitching after the at-bat is completed. Note: The game goes faster if the designated adult pitcher is the person acting as the umpire/calling balls and strikes.

- viii) The strike zone is from the armpits to the bottom of the knees, and one ball width inside and outside over the plate. The strike zone is intended to be liberal to encourage the batters to swing and to provide positive reinforcement to the pitcher.
  - ix) No illegal pitches (i.e. balk) will be called.
  - x) If a player pitcher hits two batters in an inning, the pitcher shall be replaced and may no longer pitch in the game.
  - xi) To assist the catcher and expedite play, an adult may be positioned behind the catcher (near the backstop) to retrieve pitched balls and return them to the pitcher.
  - xii) A pitch count must be recorded for your team. A parent volunteer may be recruited to record the pitch count. The pitch count for each pitcher is age based. A pitching log can be found on SVLL website. Days of rest requirements must be followed.
  - xiii) A player pitcher may pitch a maximum of two innings per game and is subject to the standard pitch count limitations outlined in the Little League rule book. Managers are also responsible for ensuring that pitchers receive the required days of rest. Any violation of these rules shall result in disciplinary action for the manager.
  - xiv) Managers should practice pitching for all players and provide them an opportunity to pitch in a game when a reasonable skill level has been achieved.
- f) Bunting
- i) Bunting is allowed only if agreed upon in advance of the game by both managers.
- g) Base running
- i) No stealing or advancing on past balls is permitted.
  - ii) There is no "must slide" rule. Umpires will enforce Rule 7.08(a) (3), which states that "Any runner is out when the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag". Sliding must be feet first.
  - iii) Collision at First Base: The First Baseman is only entitled to the inside half of First Base; base runners should be directed to touch the outside half of First Base. If a base runner stops or slows down to avoid a collision at First Base because the fielder has strayed across the base, the base runner is to be declared "Safe".
  - iv) Collision at Home Plate: Players must attempt to avoid a collision at Home Plate. The catcher is only entitled to the inside half of home plate; base runners should be directed to touch the outside half of home plate. Base Coaches should be cognizant of this when deciding whether or not to send a runner.
  - vi) Defensive players may not block the base or the home plate if no play is imminent.

- h) End Of Play
  - i) A given play ends when the ball is controlled by the player pitcher within the infield and FAIR TERRITORY and he raises the ball in the air.
  - ii) Runners in progress must return to the base they are coming from unless they are over halfway to the next base. Umpire, Managers and coaches should use reasonable discretion in these situations.

#### **4) Starting and Ending the Game**

- 1) Prior to beginning a game, the plate umpire (or HOME team manager) shall confirm the start time with both managers. Scorekeepers shall mark down the official start time of the game.
- 2) During the Regular Season, no new inning shall begin more than 90 minutes after the start of the game. However, the current inning may continue as necessary, until concluded; so long as continued play is not impaired by darkness.
- 3) A new inning starts the moment the 3rd out is made or the five-run limit is reached completing the preceding inning.
- 4) The official time of the games shall be kept by the plate umpire or HOME team manager.
- 5) Should the umpire or manager fail to suspend the game within this timeframe, it is not grounds for a protest.
- 6) "5-run rule": A team may score no more than five runs per half-inning.
- 7) "10-run rule": Rule 4.10(e) shall NOT be observed in this division. Managers should use discretion with base runners and scoring when the run differential is significant so as to avoid demoralizing the other team.
- 8) The Infield Fly Rule will not be enforced in the Farm Division.

## **5. Pre-Game Activities**

- 1) The "Home" team shall occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup> base dugout, the "Visiting" team shall occupy the 1<sup>st</sup> base dugout.
- 2) The Home team shall have the field prepared 25 minute prior to the start of the game. This includes watering and dragging the field, painting the lines, and setting up bases.
- 3) The Visiting team shall have use of the infield/outfield for warm-up from 25 to 15 minutes prior to the start of the game.
- 4) The Home team shall have use of the infield/outfield for warm-up from 15 to 5 minutes prior to the start of the game.
- 5) The managers and umpires of both teams shall meet at home plate to exchange line-ups and discuss ground rules 5 minutes prior to the start of the game.
- 6) The Visiting team shall breakdown the field at the end of the game when both teams are from Sunnyvale Little league. During interlock games, the Home team is responsible for breaking down the field as well.

If there is another game following, the batter's box and pitching mound should be fixed and holes should be filled in. If you are the last game of the day, the bases should be removed, and the field should be watered (FIRST) and then dragged in addition to fixing the holes.

## **6. Ground Rules**

- 1) Any batted fly ball adjudged to be within the playing field that is caught by a fielder whose momentum carries him into a Dead Ball Area is live, the batter is out and all runners may tag and advance at their own risk - ("Catch and Carry Rule").
- 2) Any batted fly ball adjudged to be within the playing field that is caught by a fielder who falls into or within a Dead Ball Area is dead, the batter is out and all runners are awarded one base from their base at the time of the pitch.
- 3) Any batted fly ball adjudged to be over a Dead Ball Area and caught by a fielder still within the playing field is live, the batter is out and all runners may tag and advance at their own risk.

- 4) Any batted fly ball adjudged to be over a Dead Ball Area and caught by a fielder who is also in the Dead Ball Area shall be ruled "no catch," the ball is dead and no runner may advance.

## **6. Field Definition (applies to all fields)**

- 1) The field is not fully enclosed.
- 2) There is a backstop, fence to the dugouts on the 1st and 3rd base sides and an outfield fence.
- 3) There are non-enclosed sides beyond the dugouts to the outfield fence.
- 4) The Dead Ball Area shall be defined as the area beyond an imaginary line extended along the front of the 1st or 3rd base dugouts to an intersection with the outfield fence.
- 5) The Bull Pen, or pitching warm-up area, shall be either of the following two locations.
  - a) Within the field of play at the farthest point from the infield where the outfield fence intersects the projection of the Dead Ball Area line.
  - b) Off the field of play provided they are visible to the managing staff of the team.
    1. The pitcher shall pitch away from the infield toward the outfield so that stray balls do not come into the field of play.
    2. A player with a glove and batting helmet shall be positioned facing the infield to protect the pitcher and catcher from errant batted and thrown balls.
    3. A coach or manager is allowed to be present to monitor the warm up.

# Change Log

Change Date	Section Edited	Changed by	Change