

# Sunnyvale Little League

## Pioneer Division Rules

Last modified 2/13/17

### 1. Guidelines

- 1) The purpose of Little League Baseball at the Pioneer level is to achieve the following:
  - a) Introduce players to the basics of the game and hitting live pitches from an adult.
  - 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.
  - b) 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.
  - c) Will not keep standings.
  
- 3) The Lower Division Player Agent will manage the Pioneer 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 Pioneer.
  
- 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) Game
  - a) No score is kept.
  - b) The game will last for 1 hour and 15 minutes or four (4) innings. Any inning in progress at the 1 hour and 15 minute time will be played to completion, but no new inning shall be started after that time.
  - c) The batting team must have players seated behind the backstop or in foul territory - wearing batting helmets.
  - d) Only the current batter is allowed to hold a bat. A good practice - set up the bat rack inside the backstop.
  - e) Players must not be allowed to roam freely, play catch, or visit with parents while the game is in progress.
  - f) A coach from the defensive team will call outs on the bases.

- 2) The following rules shall be observed:

- a) Offense

- i) All players bat through the order once each inning, or until three (3) outs are made (whichever event occurs first retires the team "at bat").
- ii) Mix up the lineup throughout the season.
- iii) A coach from the batting team will pitch overhand from one knee at a distance between 20 and 25 feet from the back of home plate. The coach pitcher should give the player every reasonable opportunity to put the ball in play. If a player is struggling to make contact, the coach pitcher may try underhand soft toss. If the player continues to struggle, the coach should inform the player that they have 3 more pitches to put the ball in play or they will be declared out. Hitting from a tee is not permitted.

The player pitcher must be positioned behind the coach pitcher and off to one side. If a ball in play hits or is caught by the coach pitcher, the coach should drop the ball, move out of the way and allow play to continue.

The ball is dead and runners must not advance once the ball is returned to the coach pitcher.

- iv) There are no walks.
- v) Base runners advance one base per hit.

- vi) Only one base is allowed on an overthrow.
- vii) No stealing or intentional bunting is allowed.
- viii) Home Run Hitter. The last player, of the batting order, is the “home run hitter.” After hitting the ball, the home run hitter clears the bases and gets to run around all the bases. The defense should wait until all runners have touched home plate. **Only implement this option if agreed by both managers.**
- ix) After the Spring Break, “doubles” may be introduced. A runner may be sent to second base by the first base coach on a hit to the outfield. **Only implement this option if agreed by both managers.**

b) Defense

- i) Every player plays defense.
- ii) Usually the coach for the batting team will serve as catcher. Player catchers may be used during the second half of the season, if a majority of the Pioneer managers agree. Catchers must wear all required safety equipment, including protective cups for boys.
- iii) Player rotation on defense is mandatory each inning.
- iv) Each player should play infield at least one inning.
- v) Keep track of defensive positioning so that every player plays infield an equal amount of innings over the course of the season. For safety reasons, only players who have demonstrated a reasonable level of skill should be positioned at first base and pitcher. Managers should use their best judgment when making such determinations.

## 4. Pioneer Training Objectives

The players should be instructed and coached in the following:

- The nine basic positions.
- Base running fundamentals.
- Catching, throwing and fielding the ball.
- Understanding of outs, both force outs and tag plays.
- The ability to hit a pitched ball.
- Introduction to pitching (in practice only).
- Good sportsmanship and how to have fun playing baseball.

## 5. Safety

The following rules (as well as all rules documented in the official Little League rule book) will be followed in regard to players' safety.

- Proper equipment must be used at all times.
- The batter and all base runners must wear batting helmets.
- 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 in the batter’s box.
- When a team is at bat, all players on the batting team must remain in the dugout behind the fence, or behind the backstop when on the T-ball field.
- “Safety” balls will be used.

## **6. Field Rules**

When playing on the T-ball field, the first home team of the day shall set up the field, place benches and take whatever steps are necessary to see that the field is ready for the day. The last home team of the day shall put away all equipment and make sure it is securely locked up in the storage locker.

If one of the larger fields are used for a game, the managers need to learn how to properly prep the field. We will send out more information if necessary.

## **7. Other Information**

- A maximum of two defensive team coaches may be on the field to coach their players and should be positioned behind the outfielders.
- Players are not allowed to coach bases.
- Score will not be kept. Every team is considered a winner and every player should have a positive experience.

# Change Log

Change Date	Section Edited	Changed by	Change