

## **Watchung Little League** Major League Rules

The following represent the rules adopted at the local level by the Watchung Little League for the Major League Division, or represent clarifications of official rules. These local rules and clarifications supersede the national Little League rules for the topics that they pertain to. All other aspects of league play not specifically identified in this list of local rules will be governed by the most recent edition of the Official Regulations and Playing Rules of the Little League, for the Major League Division.

### **General**

1. All games are 6 innings in length unless extended in a tie situation or shortened because: 1) the umpire calls the game, or 2) the home team needs none or only a portion of its half of the 6<sup>th</sup> inning.
2. A game is considered official after 3 ½ innings if the home team is winning. If the home team is losing after 3 ½ innings, then the fourth inning must be completed to constitute an official game. If a game is suspended before the game is official, the game will be resumed exactly where it left off when the teams next meet. [Official Rule 4.10d]
3. The umpire makes the decision to call games due to darkness, rain, etc. once the game has started. This decision is in the umpire's **complete discretion** and opinions of coaches should not be given unless such input is requested by the umpire.
4. Evening games start at 5:45PM for April; 6:00PM thereafter. The game must start if each team has at least 8 players present.
5. A team that does not have at least 8 players present within 15 minutes of the designated starting time will forfeit the game.
6. One extra base will be awarded on an overthrow into foul territory or out of play (unless a defensive player intentionally throws the ball out-of-bounds, in which case the runner can advance three bases).
7. Darkness Rule: When a game is called on account of darkness before a full inning is completed, any runs scored in the inning do not count and the score reverts back to the score at the end of the last completed inning. The decision to call a game on account of darkness is in the umpire's **complete discretion** and opinions of coaches should not be given unless such input is requested by the umpire.
8. Duration Rule: No new inning will be started after 2 hours of play. The bottom half of an inning will be started if the top half of the inning started before the 2 hour mark

UNLESS the game is called on account of darkness. In that case, per the Darkness Rule, any runs scored in the top half of the inning do not count and the score reverts back to the score at the end of the last completed inning.

9. Intentional walks are not permitted.

## Players

1. No more than nine players are permitted on the field at game time per team
2. Outfielders must all play on the outfield grass.
3. The batting order must include all players at the game. Any player showing up after the game has started will be inserted at the end of the batting order.
4. No player shall sit out for a third inning until all other players have sat out for two innings. Players shall not sit out for consecutive innings.
5. No leading off base before the ball breaks the plane of home plate.
6. Runners must slide (except at 1<sup>st</sup> base) on close plays. No headfirst slides except when going back to a base. Whether a play is a “close play” is at the **complete discretion** of the umpire.
7. Bunting is allowed, however fake bunts are not permitted; if a batter squares to bunt and takes a full swing, it is considered an illegal action and the player is out.
8. Catchers and pitchers must wear cups and it should be strongly urged that all players wear cups.
9. Stealing of any base, including home, will be permitted. However, the base runner’s foot must stay on the base until the ball has broken the plane of home plate.
10. If a ball is overthrown in a base-stealing situation, and the ball remains in fair territory, then the runner may advance at his own risk. That is, there is no limit on an overthrow for balls that stay in fair territory. If the ball is overthrown into foul territory or off the playing field, then a runner will be limited to advancing one base (see General Rule 7).
11. A clearly committed base runner that is stealing can continue to advance to the next base if a catcher opts not to make a play and returns the ball to the pitcher.
12. All managers and coaches should recommend and encourage the use of mouth guards, protective cups and protective heart pads. The topic of protective gear use will be communicated to parents in their “package of information” and acknowledged by

the parents to the Managers and the Watchung Little League via signing the “Parental Acknowledgement” form.

13. When the pitcher has the ball and returns to the rubber and there is a base runner with his foot off of the base taunting the pitcher, the base runner must immediately return to base or attempt to advance to the next base. There is no leading off base.

14. No play on dropped third strike. That is, the batter will be considered out and cannot advance to first base on a dropped third strike.

## Pitching

1. The pitch count regulations in the Official Rules will be followed in all respects. Some of the key provisions are:

The manager must remove the pitcher when said pitcher reaches the limit for his/her age

League Age:

- 17-18 105 pitches per day
- 13 -16 95 pitches per day
- 11 -12 85 pitches per day
- 9-10 75 pitches per day
- 7-8 50 pitches per day

**Exception:** If a pitcher reaches the limit imposed in Regulation VI (c) for his/her league age while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs: 1. That batter reaches base; 2. That batter is put out; 3. The third out is made to complete the half-inning. **Note 1: A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day.**

**Pitchers league age 14 and under must adhere to the following rest requirements:**

- If a player pitches 66 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 51 - 65 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 36 - 50 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 21 - 35 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest is required

No player playing catcher for 4 or more innings may come in to pitch in that game.

2. A manager or coach on the home team shall be the official pitch count recorder, but the visiting team should also count the pitches. Official pitch counts will be tracked and

recorded in the home team's scorebook. It is suggested that the teams confer after each half inning to confirm their pitch counts are the same.

3. The teams must confer at the end of the game to confirm that the home team's pitch count record is accurate. The home team must post pitch counts to the League's web site within 24 hours of the game.
4. Any disputes about the accuracy of the pitch count that cannot be resolved informally, and any other alleged violations of the pitch count regulations, may be resolved by formal protest.
5. No coaches are allowed to stand behind the catcher during the game.
6. A pitcher once removed as a pitcher may not pitch again in the same game, in the same or a subsequent inning. The only exception is that if a game goes to extra innings, the pitcher previously removed may pitch again, but once removed in extra innings, he may not pitch again in that game.
7. A pitcher cannot stop or hold up once he is in motion if there are runners on base. They must follow through with the pitch. A violation of this rule will be called a balk and all runners on base will advance one base.

### **Field Preparation and Maintenance**

1. Both teams are responsible for field preparation before the game and field maintenance after the game. This includes raking the field (infield, baselines, pitchers mound, home plate area), lining the base lines, and putting in the bases before all games and raking and dragging the field and putting the bases and all equipment away after the game
2. Both teams' coaches must inspect for debris or dangerous conditions prior to the start of the game.

### **Other**

1. Games will be postponed (prior to the official game start) based on mutual agreement of the managers. The home team manager must also notify the Major League Commissioner regarding the postponement.
2. Coaches are responsible for cleaning out the dugouts after the game.
3. No food allowed in dugouts.
4. Only Watchung Little League issued uniforms and hats are allowed.

5. No non-coach adults or children are allowed in the dugout or dugout area.
6. The maximum numbers of adults that are allowed in the dugout area are four (4), including managers, coaches and team parent. If the designated coaches are not available, substitute Rutgers card holding parents can be used
7. Coaches are expected to keep their players under control. This includes:
  - a. Appropriate language and cheering.
  - b. Remaining in the dugout during the game.
  - c. One (1) player only in the on deck area and no bats allowed in the dugout.
  - d. No practice swings with a bat except outside the batter's box immediately prior to a player's turn at bat.
  - e. No booing or heckling of the other team.
8. Managers must report all injuries or accidents to the Major League Commissioner and safety officer immediately.
9. Home team field warm-up for weeknight games: 5:10PM – 5:25 PM for April games; 5:25PM – 5:40PM thereafter; visitors from 5:25PM – 5:40PM for April games; 5:40PM – 5:55PM thereafter. Prior to 5:10 is on a first come basis. The equivalent pre-game warm-up times shall apply to Saturday games as well.
10. Both managers will file an “end of game report” with game scores and individual player pitch-counts within 24 hours via e-mail to the Major League Commissioner.
11. Only bats that are clearly marked "Approved For Play in: Little League" can be used in a game or practice. The offensive team's manager is responsible for enforcing this rule. All non-approved bats must be removed from the dugout and warm-up areas prior to the game. Violations may subject the offending team to a forfeiture of the game and/or other disciplinary action by the Watchung Little League Board.
12. WLL home rule requires batters/runners to wear NOCSAE approved safety helmets with the matching face guard (Helmet and faceguard need to be of the same manufacturer and cannot be modified).