

## WATCHUNG LITTLE LEAGUE

### MINOR LEAGUE RULES

#### GENERAL

1. Games are 6 innings in length--unless extra innings are needed to break a tie. Umpire, at his complete discretion, makes decision to call games because of darkness, rain, field conditions, etc.
2. It is an official game if 3 ½ innings are played and the home team is ahead, or 4 full innings are played (either one, a "4 Inning Game"). If less than a 4 Inning Game is played and the game is suspended—it shall be started up again when the teams meet again, at the point it left off, to complete the game.
3. Evening games start at 5:45PM in April, and 6PM thereafter. Games must start if each team has at least 8 players present.
4. Game will be deemed a forfeit by a team that does not have 8 players present within 15 minutes of the designated start time.
5. Either team can score a maximum of seven runs per inning. After seven runs are scored, that half of the inning is ended. A trailing team has the right to score more than 7 runs in a single inning—up to the point when the score is tied. Upon scoring the tying run, the inning ends. The 7-run cap is lifted for both teams in the 6th inning.
6. The losing team's coach can invoke the 10-run "Mercy Rule" in the 6th inning.
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. A coach may be positioned in the outfield to direct his/her players, but may not interfere with play. Interference will result in an extra base at the umpire's discretion.

10. A defensive coach is permitted to stand behind the home-plate umpire to pick up stray balls and speed up the pace of the game. He may not touch balls getting past the catcher when a runner is on 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> base. This would constitute interference, and runners will be awarded an extra base at the umpire's discretion.

### **STEALING, OVERTHROWS, SLIDING, BUNTING**

1. A runner may steal either 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base, but not both, after reaching the base paths. A runner may not steal home. Runner must wait for pitch to “break the plane” of the front edge of home plate before leaving base. A clearly “committed” base stealer cannot be forced to return to the base simply because the catcher chooses to return ball to the pitcher (instead of attempting throw the runner out). Runner stealing 3<sup>rd</sup> cannot advance to home under any circumstances, regardless of whether there is an overthrow, botched play or any other scenario.
2. In general play, one extra base will be awarded on an overthrow landing out of play and declared a dead ball by the umpire. The runner advances at his own risk on any overthrow not declared out of play/dead ball by the umpire. Further, no more than one extra base may be taken on each overthrow remaining in fair territory.
3. Runners must slide on all close plays (except 1st base). No headfirst sliding except when going back to a prior base. Players not sliding on a close play shall be called out. The decision as to whether a play is a “close play” is in the umpire's **complete discretion** and opinions of coaches should not be given unless such input is requested by the umpire.
4. Bunting shall only be permitted during child pitched (not machine-pitched) portions of games. No fake bunting is permitted: a batter squared off for bunt cannot then take a full swing or the batter will be called out.
5. No advancing to first base on a dropped third strike.

### **PLAYERS**

1. Up to ten players are allowed in the field.
2. All outfielders must 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. As the Minor League Division is intended to be instructional, it is recommended that every player have the option of playing an infield position (as assigned by Manager/Coach) for at least one inning per game.

5. No player shall sit out a second inning until all other players have sat out one inning. No player shall sit out for more than two innings in a game.

6. **All catchers and pitchers must wear protective cups.** It is also strongly suggested for all other players to wear a cup. All Managers/Coaches should encourage use of mouth guards & protective heart pads. Watchung Little League requires all players to wear matching face cages with helmets. (See Other Rule #10).

## PITCHING

1. The pitch count regulations in the 2010 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 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. Pitchers cannot pitch non-consecutive innings in a game.
6. After any combination of 4 walks and hit batters in an inning by the same pitcher, or a combination of 6 walks and hit batters by one team in an inning, the pitching machine must come in as a relief pitcher for the remainder of that inning (See Machine Pitch Rules for special rules that apply when machine is used).
7. A pitcher must be replaced from the game if he hits 2 batters in a single inning or four in a game.
8. All pitchers must pitch from the regulation distance pitching rubber.
9. All games prior to May 1<sup>st</sup> are to be machine pitched until each player on the hitting team bats at least one time against the pitching machine, and then child pitched, beginning with the next full inning, for all subsequent innings. However, even during child pitched innings, the machine should be used as a relief pitcher (as per Pitching Rule #6).
10. All official games beginning May 1<sup>st</sup> are to be child pitched for all innings, unless the Managers agree to some use of machine pitching. However, even during child pitched innings, the machine should be used as a relief pitcher (as per Pitching Rule #6).
11. All playoff games are to be child pitched for all innings. However, during the playoffs, the machine should be used as a relief pitcher (as per Pitching Rule #6).
12. For every batter facing a child pitcher, the count will not start until: (a) the pitcher throws a strike (either called, swinging or foul ball) or (b) on the third pitch, whichever occurs first. For example, if the first two pitches thrown are balls, the count will start on the third pitch. If the first pitch thrown is a strike, the count will begin with that strike. All pitches count towards the official pitch count of the pitcher.

### **MACHINE PITCH RULES**

1. No stealing against the pitching machine.

2. No bunting against the pitching machine.
3. No walks against the pitching machine.
4. The batter is called out after 5 “good pitches” (in the umpire’s discretion) or 3 swinging strikes—whichever comes first.
5. In the event a 5<sup>th</sup> good pitch is fouled, the batter will continue until a ball is not fouled or he makes an out.
6. The adult coach operating the machine must crouch behind the machine when the batter puts the ball into play and may not verbally coach from the field after a pitched ball is put into play. The coach is not to distract the opposing team by excessive movements or noise. If, in the discretion of the umpire, the coach unintentionally interferes with a defensive player, the ball is dead and will be considered a “no pitch”. (A “no pitch” shall not count towards the batter’s ball/strike count).
7. A thrown ball hitting the machine is a live ball (except during the exchange between the catcher and pitcher after each pitch).
8. A batted ball hit up the middle under the pitching machine, even if it does not come in contact with the machine, is a dead ball/no pitch.
9. A batted ball hit up the middle that passes over the machine is a live ball, unless the umpire in his discretion calls it a dead ball/no pitch due to obstruction concerns.
10. If a batted ball is popped up in the vicinity over the pitcher’s mound, then at the umpire’s discretion he shall declare the ball a dead ball/no pitch to avoid potential injury.
11. A batted ball hitting the pitching machine or a coach manning the pitching machine or an umpire standing by the machine is a dead ball/no pitch
12. If a batted ball comes to rest on the dirt area of pitcher’s mound near the machine, then at the umpire’s discretion he should declare the ball dead ball/no pitch to avoid potential injury.
13. The player/pitcher must stand beside the machine before the pitch is thrown—the player can move after the pitch is thrown.
14. The machine is calibrated by both Managers at the start of the game and is not to be adjusted once play begins—unless by mutual consent when needed.
15. The targeted speed of the machine is to remain at 36 MPH. It is understood that the machine can vary from pitch to pitch on its own.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SETTING MACHINE: 1) Push power (orange) button. 2) Enter “1” using up arrow button and enter “9” using down arrow button, then hit Enter button. 3) Again, enter “1” using up arrow button and enter “9” using down arrow button, then hit Enter button. 4) Set speed to “45%” by using up and down buttons appropriate. Do a test pitch and check display for speed. If speed is more than 36 MPH, reduce the %. If speed is less than 36MPH, increase the %.

16. If machine cannot be corrected or is not able to be adjusted to function properly within 10 minutes, then the game will be child pitched in its entirety unless an alternate machine is available.

### **FIELD PREPARATION/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, pitcher’s mound, and home plate area), lining the base lines, and installing the bases before all games. Post-game maintenance shall include raking and dragging the infield, putting away the bases and all other loose equipment into lock-up storage.
2. Coaches and their teams are responsible for cleaning out refuse from the dugout and field areas after the conclusion of the game. People should avoid overfilling trashcans; garbage bags are available from the shack attendant if needed.

### **OTHER**

1. Games can be postponed based on mutual agreement of the Managers. The home team manager must notify the umpire 48 hrs before the postponement so that the League will not be charged for cost.
2. No food allowed in dugouts.
3. Only Watchung Little League issued uniforms and hats are allowed. No modifications are permitted.
4. Absolutely no non-coach adults or children allowed in dugout area.
5. Coaches are expected to keep their players under control. This includes:
  - A. Appropriate language and cheering.
  - B. Remaining in the dugout during game.
  - C. 1 Player only in on deck area and no swinging of bats allowed in dugout.
6. For any team forfeiting 3 or more games, the Manager shall appear before the Board and is subject to disciplinary action.

8. Home team field warm-up: 5:10PM – 5:25PM for April games, 5:25PM – 5:40PM thereafter

Visiting team field warm-up: 5:25PM – 5:40PM for April games; 5:40PM – 5:55PM thereafter

9. Both managers shall file an end of game report including the game score and exact number of pitches thrown by each pitcher within 24 hrs via email to the Minor League Commissioner.

10. Watchung Little League rules require 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).