

DOVER/SHERBORN YOUTH BASEBALL RULES

Dover Sherborn Youth Baseball closely follows official Little League rules. The following are modifications or clarifications of the official Little League rules and take precedence in our leagues.

Unless otherwise noted, these rules apply to all three leagues:

AA – 3rd graders

AAA – 4th graders

Majors – 5th and 6th graders

A. PLAYERS

A1. Teams must have at least 8 players in order to begin play and for the game to be official. If one or both teams have fewer than 8 players, they may use the allotted time to play a scrimmage or practice, but the team with insufficient numbers will forfeit.

A2. If one team has fewer than 8 players, and the other team has enough players and wishes to “lend” to the opposing team such that both teams have at least 8, then the game is official. A team may also lend a player to the opponent such that both teams have 9 players.

A3. If a Majors team knows in advance that it will have fewer than 9 players, it may “call up” a player from a AAA team, provided that **the parent of the AAA player gives approval**. A team **cannot** call up a player if they have 9 or more players present from their permanent roster. AA players may be called up to play for a AAA team provided that parental approval is given and also provided that the player is not scheduled to play in a AA game at the same time. (AA and AAA games typically occur simultaneously, so call ups of AA players will be rare, mostly when games are rescheduled.) A player who is called up **cannot pitch**, but is subject to all of the other rules of the higher-level team.

A4. Players must be in full uniform to be eligible to play (including a hat).

B. BATTING

B1. All players on a team’s roster will bat in the batting order whether playing in the field or not.

B2. If a player bats out of order and the infraction is brought to the umpire’s attention while the incorrect batter is still at bat, the umpire will declare that the batter is out. The correct batter (who should have been up to bat) will then be at bat with a new count. If an out declared on an incorrect batter is the third out of the inning, the correct batter will lead off the next inning.

B3. The dropped third strike rule will **not** be in effect at any level. If strike three is declared on a ball that is not caught by the catcher, the batter is out and may not advance to 1st base.

B4. All bats must have a barrel diameter that is no more than 2 ¼ inches. This restriction also applies to wooden and aluminum bats, which are otherwise permitted. Composite bats must be Little League eligible. If a batter uses an ineligible bat and the infraction is brought to the umpires

attention, the umpire will declare that the batter is out and, if the ball was put in play, all base runners will be returned to their previous bases.

B5. If a batter throws the bat once, the player is given a warning. If the same batter throws the bat a second time during the same game, the batter is declared out and all base runners will return to their prior bases.

B6. No intentional walks are permitted.

B7. Bunting is not permitted at the AA leagues. However, bunting is allowed at the AAA and Majors.

C. BASERUNNING

C1. Stealing and advancing on passed balls or wild pitches is not permitted in the AA league.

C2. Stealing and advancing on passed balls or wild pitches is allowed on a limited basis in AAA. Unlimited stealing and advancing is permitted of 2nd and 3rd bases. However, each team may steal home (or advance to home on a passed ball or wild pitch) only once per inning (even if the player who attempts to take home is tagged out). If a team mistakenly attempts to steal home a second time during the inning, a dead ball will be declared and the runner returned to 3rd base. It is permissible to modify this rule if all coaches and the league director agree to the change.

C3. In Majors, unlimited stealing and advancing on passed balls is permitted.

C4. Base runners must stay in contact with their occupied base until the pitched ball reaches home plate. If a player leaves base early, a dead ball will be declared, and all runners will be returned to base; the umpire will then give the team committing the infraction one warning. With all subsequent infractions committed by that team during the game (even if it is a different player), a dead ball will be declared and the base runner will be declared out (and all other baserunners will be returned to their bases).

C5. Base runners must slide, feet first, into a base when the defensive team is attempting a play at that base (except at 1st base). If a player who should slide does not do so, the umpire will give one warning to the team committing the infraction; subsequent infraction by the same team (even if committed by a different player) will result in the base runner being declared out.

C6. Headfirst slides are not permitted, unless the player is returning to a base. Players who inappropriately slide headfirst will be declared out.

C7. Base runners may not jump, crawl, or somersault to avoid a tag; if this infraction occurs, the runner will be declared out.

C8. If a base runner who occupied 3rd base advances partially to home on a pitch that is handled cleanly by the catcher, and stops their advance toward home, that runner must return to 3rd base and cannot continue to advance home. However, if the catcher puts the ball in play, then the runner may resume their advance toward home.

C9. Pinch running is not permitted unless the base runner needs to be substituted due to injury. Once ready to reenter the game, the injured player may play in the field or bat the next time they come up in the order.

C10. On a walk, the base runner becomes “live” after touching 1st base and may be tagged out.

C11. In the AA and AAA leagues, batters who walk must stop at 1st base until a subsequent pitch is thrown to the next batter. In Majors, a batter who walks may attempt to advance to 2nd base provided that they do not halt their motion and provided that the pitcher is not yet in contact with the pitching rubber.

D. DEFENSE

D1. At the AA level, teams with more than 9 players may field 10 at a time (including 4 outfielders). This is not permitted at AAA and Majors.

D2. Each player in uniform must play at least three defensive innings (9 outs). There are three exceptions to this rule: (1) if the game is shortened; (2) if the player is injured; and (3) if the player is being reprimanded by the coach for insubordination or missed practices. If the player is being reprimanded, the umpire and the opposing coach must be made aware of the situation before the start of the game.

D3. A team cannot make a defensive substitution (other than changing the pitcher) in the middle of an inning, except in cases of injury to a player in the field. Players in the field, except for the catcher, are permitted to exchange positions at any time. During an inning, the catcher can only be substituted in the event of injury.

D4. Catchers must wear appropriate protective gear, including a cup.

D5. On overthrows in which the ball crosses or is carried into territory that is deemed “out of play”, each base runner advances one base. On overthrows in which the ball hits the backstop or the dugout fence, the ball is live, and base runners may continue to advance at their own peril.

D6. In the Majors league, there is no “Mercy Rule”. The inning is over only after three outs are made.

D7. In the AA and AAA leagues, a team cannot score more than 6 runs in a single inning. Thus, an inning ends when 3 defensive outs are made or the offensive team scores 6 runs, whichever comes first. The exception to this rule is in the final inning of the game:

- In the final inning, if the visiting team is losing or the game is tied, the visiting team may score unlimited runs up to a maximum of 6 runs more than the home team’s total. If the visiting team is already ahead at the start of the last inning, the 6 run ‘mercy rule’ applies.
- If the home team is losing in the bottom of the last inning, they may score unlimited runs until the game is won or three outs are made

- If the final inning cannot be completed because the game is stopped due to darkness, the official score of the game reverts to the score at the end of the previous inning.

E. PITCHING

E1. Some pitch count rules apply **at all times**, regardless of whether or not the game being played is a regular season game or a playoff/championship game. These “no exception” rules are as follows:

E1a: Daily pitch counts – the following daily pitch limits may be exceeded only if the limit is reached during an at-bat (in such cases, the pitcher may continue the at-bat until the batter reaches base, the batter is put out, the third out is made to end the half inning or, in AAA, the mercy rule is reached on a steal of home).

Age	Daily pitch count
Under 10	50
10-11	75
12 and up	85

E1b: Days of rest – the following rules apply without exception:

- If a player throws 20 or fewer pitches in a day, he or she may pitch the following day (ie, 0 days of rest)
- If a player throws 21-35 pitches in a day, 1 calendar day of rest is required (eg, if a player throws 30 pitches on Monday, he or she can pitch on Wednesday but not on Tuesday)
- If a player throws 36-50 pitches in a day, 2 calendar days of rest are required
- If a player throws 51-65 pitches in a day, 3 calendar days of rest are required
- If a player throws 66 or more pitches in a day, 4 calendar days of rest are required
- As noted above, there are **no** exceptions to this rule.

E1c: If a pitcher throws 61 or more pitches in a game, he or she cannot later play the position of catcher in that game.

E2. The weekly pitch count rule is as follows: AA – 75 pitches per week; AAA – 85 pitches per week; Majors – 95 pitches per week. The weekly pitch count rule can be waived during the playoffs/championship; however, required days of rest and daily pitch limits are **not** waived.

E3. Some players, in addition to playing Little League, also play on AAU/EBL teams. Although pitching in AAU/EBL games do not count toward DSYBS pitch limits, coaches and parents are strongly encouraged to account for pitches thrown in those games when making pitching decisions. The pitch limits listed above are recommended by Little League Baseball as a means of preventing injury to youth players.

E4. Both of the head coaches (or assistants on both sides) will count pitches for their own pitchers **and** for the opposing pitchers. It is encouraged that the coaches confer briefly after each half inning to and come to a consensus about how many were thrown.

E5. If a head coach believes a pitch count infraction is about to take place, he or she must notify the home plate umpire, using good sportsmanship, before the infraction takes place. The umpire, once alerted, will meet with both head coaches to compare pitch counts. If there is a discrepancy of five or fewer pitches, the coach with the pitcher on the mound will be presumed to have the correct pitch count. However, if there is a discrepancy of six or more pitches, both coaches will review their scorebooks to determine if a mistake has been made, and try to reach a consensus. If not consensus is reached, the umpire will average the two pitch count numbers and both coaches will abide by that ruling.

E6. Head coaches are required to log pitch counts onto the DSYBS.org website within 24 hours of the conclusion of the game. Head coaches who need instructions on how to log pitch counts on the website should contact the Commissioner who can either provide instruction or log pitches on behalf of the coach.

E7. A pitcher who hits three batters in an inning or four batters in a game must stop pitching and be removed from the position (and cannot return as pitcher during that game, even if pitch limits have not yet been reached).

E8. In Majors and AAA, pitchers who are removed from a game cannot return to pitch, even if his or her pitch limit has not been reached (the exception is in a playoff or championship game that goes to extra innings – in such cases, a player may return to pitch provided his or her pitch limit has not been reached). In AA, players who pitched and were removed may return as pitcher during that game, provided that all pitch count rules are being followed.

E9. Coaches may call time out and visit the mound. One mound visit is permitted without removing the pitcher. If the coach visits the mound for a second time while a player is pitching, that pitcher must be removed.

E10. In general, all pitchers must pitch from the pitching rubber. In AA, if both coaches agree, a slower/weaker pitcher may throw from 3-5 feet in front of the rubber.

E11. Fastballs (including two seam and cut fastballs) and changeups (including knuckleballs) are permitted. Breaking balls are not permitted. If a breaking ball is thrown, the home plate umpire will declare “no pitch”, the play is dead, and the pitcher will be warned. If the infraction occurs a second time, the pitcher must be removed.

E12. The strike zone is from the shoulders to the knees and the width of the plate.

F. LENGTH OF GAMES

F1. Games will be 6 innings.

F2. No game shall continue past 8:00 pm, and no new inning may be started after 7:45 pm (ie, if the 5th inning ends after 7:45 pm, the 6th inning will not be played). The umpire may also end a game before its completion due to darkness or adverse weather conditions/player safety. However, the umpire is strongly encouraged to not call a game for darkness during an inning or after completion of the top half of an inning if the home team is behind.

There may be unusual occasions in which the umpire needs to stop play for darkness before an inning is over. If the final inning cannot be completed because the game is stopped for darkness, the official score of the game reverts to the score at the end of the previous inning.

F3. In the event of a tie after, extra innings will be played during playoff/championship games unless the game is called by the umpire due to darkness, adverse weather conditions, or for player safety. If a regular season game ends in a tie after 6 innings are complete, extra innings may be played, upon agreement of both head coaches and the umpire, provided that the game does not go past 8:00 pm or continue after darkness.

In the final inning, if the visiting team is losing or the game is tied, the visiting team may score unlimited runs up to a maximum of 6 runs more than the home team's total. If the visiting team is ahead going into the final inning, the 6-run maximum rule applies for the top half.

- If the home team is losing in the bottom of the last inning, they may score unlimited runs until the game is won or ended with 3 outs.
- If the top half of the last inning takes too long for the bottom half to start because of darkness, then the score reverts to the same score that had been recorded at the end of the prior inning.

G. SCHEDULING

G1. All schedules published on the website will be followed without deviation. The only exception is for games postponed due to weather. If a game is not played for reasons other than weather, a loss will be declared for both teams regardless of the outcome of the make-up game.

G2. For all games that are postponed due to weather, both head coaches should agree upon date and time, during the regular season, that the game will be made up. Due to field availability, make-up games will frequently need to occur on Friday evenings, or on Saturday or Sunday. The home team coach should call Dover Park and Rec (508-785-0474) to confirm field availability, and contact the Commissioner for help arranging an umpire.

G3. All pitch count rules apply to make-up games. Pitch counts do **not** reset for the purposes of a make-up game.

H. REPORTING/SCORING

H1. Each team must designate a scorekeeper (can be the head coach).

H2. The head coach of the winning team must post the scores on the DSYBS.org website within 24 hours. Coaches who need instruction on how to post scores should contact the Commissioner.

I. PROTESTS

I1. Protests are **not** allowed on calls or rulings made by the umpire.

12. Protests, which must be made to the League Director, are allowed only on the interpretation of the rules or player eligibility.

J. SAFETY, BEHAVIOR, and RULE ENFORCEMENT

J1. All players and coaches must remain in the dugout and out of the field of play unless they are playing a defensive position, are coaching 1st or 3rd base, or are the batter or on-deck batter.

J2. No one is allowed to be on the roof of the dugouts, and **no one** (including spectators, players, coaches) is permitted to stand behind the backstop while play is in progress.

J3. Positive, spirited cheering and encouragement is welcome. However:

- Anything that can be construed as verbal abuse of a player, coach, or team that is committed by a player, coach, or spectator, will **NOT BE TOLERATED**. Such behavior will result in ejection of the player, coach, or spectator who is responsible for the abuse.
- Abuse of an umpire by a player, coach, or spectator will **NOT BE TOLERATED**. Such behavior will result in ejection of the individual(s).
- Displaying banners or signs that have negative intent will **NOT BE TOLERATED**.
- Rhythmic chanting by players in a dugout or by spectators while play is in progress is **not** permitted.
- Coaches (and spectators) are **not** permitted to argue a judgement call with an umpire. The only arguments with umpires that are allowed are those that deal with suspected rule infractions. If a coach believes that an umpire has poor judgement in calling a game, the appropriate channel is to lodge a complaint with the Commissioner. The Commissioner will keep an account of complaints and umpires who are consistently problematic will not be used as umpires in future games.

J4. Rule violations must be brought to the umpire's attention by the opposing coach.

J5. All coaches can propose temporary rule changes for their specific league to their League Director. The League Director must obtain permission by the Commissioner to make any temporary rule changes.