

Saratoga Little League Local Rules

The following rules apply to all Saratoga Little League divisions, as appropriate. All Official Little League Rules apply unless specifically noted below.

- I. **Start & End of the Game:**
 - A. Pre-Game Warm ups, line-ups, line-up cards and LL Baseball pledge protocol:
 - 50 minutes prior to the start time: Visitor team warm-ups on the field
 - 30 minutes prior to the start time: Home team warm-ups on the field
 - 10 minutes prior to the start time: Teams line up for LL pledge, followed by plate meeting between managers and umpires, and then the home team takes the field. Failure to finish a team warm-up is not an excuse to delay the on-time start of the game.
 - B. The City of Saratoga will notify SLL if the field is not available for use because of field conditions. Field availability will be posted on the SLL website daily. If the City has approved the field for use but the weather or field conditions are poor, the team managers must both agree the field is acceptable. Once the game is turned over to the umpire-in-chief, only the umpire-in-chief may end a game for weather, darkness or time.
- II. **Scorekeeping**
 - A. The home team shall be responsible for keeping the official score sheet.
 - B. The official score sheet shall be kept inside the scorekeeper's booth (or outside the home team dugout) at all times by the home team scorekeeper. SLL will be utilizing the Game Changer application as the official 'score sheet' for the applicable divisions.
 - C. Neither the official nor team scorekeepers seated outside the dugout may communicate with the manager, coach nor do others in the dugout during the game, with the exception of confirming pitch count and player substitutions.
 - D. The official scorekeeper is to record the last names and numbers of the players in their batting order for each team.
 - E. Completed score sheets will be uploaded via Game Changer for all applicable divisions. No official stats being kept below AAA.
- III. **Pitching:** The umpire shall issue a warning to any pitcher and the managers of both teams if the pitcher hits two batters in one inning and or in the plate umpire's opinion is a safety concern because of the pitcher's lack of control. Managers shall notify the plate umpire if they have such a concern. If in the opinion of the plate umpire the pitcher does not have adequate control, the pitcher may be removed.
- IV. **Batting:** All teams will use a **continuous batting** order. All players present and eligible to play shall be listed on the batting order.
- V. **Home Team:**
 - A. The home team shall occupy the 3rd base dugout.
 - B. The home team shall provide two new approved baseballs to the plate umpire with their lineup card at the beginning of the game and have at least one ball in reserve if needed.
 - C. The home team shall remove and or replace any rain tarps for the pitcher's mound and home plate areas.
 - D. Home team is responsible for all field pregame field preparations.
- VI. **Visiting Team:**
 - A. Visiting team shall drag the field immediately following their game, remove the bases (if there is no game following and clean-up the field. If the game is an interlock game, the Home Team shall preform this function.

- VII. **Pitcher / Fielder Warm ups:** In AA and below, there is no warming up of any players between innings, except for pitchers in AA.
- VIII. **Dugouts:** All coaches/managers in the upper divisions must remain in the dugout with the gates closed at all times except to coach a base when their team is on offense (batting). For AA, Farm, Mini and T-ball, the dugout guidelines will adhere to the season rules defined by the appropriate division commissioner. No player is allowed to leave the dugout except to enter the field of play or use the restroom. If a manager would like to discuss a call with an umpire when on defense, he/she may enter the field of play once time out is granted. Only one coach/manager is allowed to enter the field of play. No siblings, parents, friends, or individuals other than a player of the team or official coach/manager are allowed in the dugout once the game has officially started. Exceptions made for player injuries or emergencies.
- IX. **Time Limit (applies to AAA and below only):** If there is a next game scheduled on the same field, then no new inning may start 45 minutes before the start time of the next game. Also note the specific time limit rules for other divisions in their respective division-specific local rules.
- X. **Season Guidelines:** SLL season will be broken into three sections (where applicable).
1) Pre-Season – games that do not count towards SLL playoff seeds, 2) Regular Season – games that do count towards SLL playoff seeds and 3) Post-Season – playoff brackets for intra-SLL tournament. The games will be decided by the individual division commissioners
- XI. **10 Run Rule:** For all divisions, Farm and above, SLL shall follow the 10 run rule- 4.10(e).
- XII. **Protests (applies to minors):** There are no protests in mini-/T-ball. All protests in other minor divisions shall be resolved before the next pitch or play.

Majors-Specific Local Rules

Minimum Defensive Play: Minimum defensive play for each player shall be nine defensive outs per six inning game. If a player plays fewer than nine defensive outs because the game was called before six innings were completed, and if the player did not play at least six defensive outs, the player must start the next game and play at least nine defensive outs.

Dropped Third Strike: The Majors Division of SLL is following the Majors-specific rule 6.05(b) (2) on dropped third strike.

Season Guidelines: As defined by Section IX of SLL Local Rules.

Player pull-up/replacement:

A manager or coach may make a request to the BOD (through the Division Commissioner/Player Agent) to remove any player that consistently misses practices or games. The Manager must notify the Division/Commissioner/Player Agent by email the next day after any player has missed all games during a seven consecutive day period, whether excused or unexcused. The Player Agent will contact the parents to verify the situation and notify the Board as required pursuant to the Operating Manual. Injuries or illness requiring absence of six weeks rehabilitation or less do not require player replacement provided that they are corroborated by a physician in writing. Injuries or illnesses requiring greater rehabilitation time are at the discretion of the Player Agent based upon facts and circumstances. No requirement to pull-up for injury within last two weeks of regular season play.

In the event that a player terminates the league, the Player Agent will instruct the manager to select a new player from AAA from the list of eligible players presented by the Player Agent. The list will exclude all AAA Managers', Coaches' and Assistant Coaches' sons/daughters unless the Manager/Coach parent agrees to allow their child to be considered for advancement to the Majors division. The Player Agent will not force any player to advance to Majors division against their or their parents' wishes. The Majors manager will have seven days from the date of the terminating player's last game to make a selection. If the Majors manager does not make a selection within that time period, the Player Agent will select a player, prioritizing 12 year-olds and any 11 year-old not selected in the Majors draft willing to advance to the Majors.

Minimum Player Rule: During regular season and post season (those games designated by the majors' commissioner), there must be a minimum of 8 players at the start of the game. Any team not fielding 8 players will be charged a forfeit.

AAA-Specific Local Rules

Pregame: No Manager/Coach should require players to be at the field more than one hour prior to game time for warm-up

Season Guidelines: As defined by Section IX of SLL Local Rules.

Time Limit: Weekday games must end at the earlier of 7.30pm or 2.5 hours after the first pitch (with the score based on the last complete inning).

Pitching:

Pitch Counts will be recorded by the official scorekeeper.

Batting: All managers will use best efforts to rotate bottom of the order and it is mandatory that every player gets to bat leadoff at least once during the season.

During pre-season and regular season games any half inning will end when 3 outs are recorded by the defensive team or 5 runs have been scored.

Minimum Defensive Play: Each player plays two innings of a four inning game, three innings of a five inning game or four innings of a six inning game. If a game situation (e.g., game called for time or darkness) prevents a player from playing her/his minimum innings for any given game, then that player will start the next game to complete his/her minimum play, then continue to play to complete current game minimum play. Minimum Player Rule: During regular season and post season (those games designated by the AAA commissioner), there must be a minimum of 8 players at the start of the game. Any team not fielding 8 players will be charged a forfeit.

Last Inning: In the 6th inning, or declared last inning, the 5-run rule is no longer in effect. The inning ends when three outs have been recorded by the defensive team. If the last inning is not the 6th inning, the last inning will be declared before the start of that inning by agreement of both managers. Declaring the last inning prior to the 6th inning will be based on expectation of not being to complete a 6-inning game, whether due to time limits or threat of darkness.

AA-Specific Local Rules

I. Rules for Pre-Season Games Only.

The AA Commissioner to determine the pre-season games. Except for Defense Field Coach and Player Pitching, all regular season guidelines also apply to pre-season.

Pre-season Defensive Field Coach: In order to further provide defensive instruction, the defense may place a defensive coach in the field. The coach may talk to individual players during dead ball periods, but are not to cause a delay of the game. All other coaches will remain in the dugout at all times (exceptions include helping catcher adjust their equipment).

Pre-season Player Pitching: Each pitcher may only pitch 20 pitches per game (pitcher can finish batter which may result in exceeding the 20 pitch limit). If the pitcher commits two walks in an inning, then adult base coach finishes inning according to coach pitching rules below.

II. **Regular Season Guidelines:** The AA Commissioner to determine the start of regular season.

Season Guidelines: As defined by Section IX of SLL Local Rules.

Pregame: No Manager/Coach should require players to be at the field more than one hour prior to game time for warm-up.

Time Limit:

All games have a time limit of 2.5 Hrs.

For weekday games, no new inning may begin after 2 hours.

For games halted at 2.5 hours, the score will be based on the last completed inning.

Player Pitching: On the third walk in an inning (by any number of pitchers), adult base coach enters to finish the third walked batter. The player resumes pitching on the next batter. Adult base coach will enter to finish all subsequently walked batters (per coach pitching rules below) for the remainder of the inning, regardless if there is a change in player pitching. On the next or any subsequent inning, this rule restarts and on the third walk in an inning (by any number of pitchers), adult base coach enters to finish the third walked batter.

Coach Pitching: Only one "warm up" pitch is permissible. Pitches must be thrown from the pitching rubber and cannot be thrown underhanded. The coach is allowed five (5) pitches, except in circumstances where the 5th pitch is fouled off. In such circumstance the batter continues until a hot or non-contact pitch.

The plate umpire shall notify the coach of the number of strikes when he/she enters to pitch. Balls will not be called. Walks or "hit by pitch" are not allowed for coach pitch. The batter will be called out once three strikes are reached, either swinging or called.

One adult must always remain in the dugout.

Batting: All managers will use best efforts to rotate the order and it is mandatory that every player bats leadoff in at least one season game.

Strike-zone: The AA strike zone shall be at least one ball width wider and taller than the NLL strike zone in order to encourage batters to swing at pitches. In general this means any pitch from the shoulders to the bottom of the knees and two ball widths on either side of the plate will be called a strike.

5-Run Rule: The defensive team will end the inning half when one team bats through the order once or after 5 runs have been scored. Exception to this rule is the Last Inning rule (see below).

Last Inning: In the 6th inning or declared last inning (to be mutually decided by managers), the 5-run rule is no longer in effect but a team can only bat through the order once.

In playoffs games - the 6th inning or declared last inning (to be mutually decided by managers due to time limit or threat of darkness), the 5-run rule is no longer in effect and the batting through the order rule is removed.

Minimum Player Rule: During regular season and post season, there must be a minimum of 8 players at the start of the game. Any team not fielding 8 players will be charged a forfeit.

Minimum Defensive Play: Two innings of a four inning game, three of five innings or four innings of a six inning game. If a game situation (e.g., game called for 10 run rule, time, or darkness) prevents a player from playing her/his minimum innings for any given game, then that player will start the next game to complete his/her minimum play, then continue to play to complete current game minimum play.

Defensive Position Rotation: The defense is able to place a total of 9 players in the field, six infielders and three outfielders. The outfielders must be at their proper position there is no stub/buck defense allowed. A player may only play three innings in any combination of the defined Key Positions. "Key Positions" are defined as: 3rd base, shortstop, 2nd base and 1st base.

Line-up Cards: Managers must have a written defensive line-up card available before each game. The line-up may be altered during the game, but may be inspected by the opposing manager at any time.

Stoppage of play: During a play initiated by a batted ball, the play is over and no further advance of any runner is allowed once the defensive team controls the ball in front of the lead runner and forces the runner to stop at (or retreat to) an unoccupied base or returns the ball to the pitcher. An error on the return throw to the pitcher does not allow runners to advance. An error by the first or third baseman into dead-ball territory will not allow the runners to advance. There is no stealing of bases in AA. Infield fly rule will not be enforced.

Farm-Specific Local Rules

Pregame: No Manager/Coach should require players to be at the field more than 30 minutes prior to game time for warm-up. Pregame warm-ups on the playing field shall not include batting practice and should be kept to ten minutes per team to ensure an on-time start of the game. Coaches may hold a batting stick off the field for batting warm-up of their players if desired.

Season Guidelines: As defined by Section IX of SLL Local Rules.

Preseason: Preseason will be determined by the Farm Commissioner. During preseason games the ten run rule will not be in effect, but the five run rule per inning will still be used to keep the game moving.

Defensive Field Coach: In order to further provide defensive instruction, the defense may place a defensive coach in the field. The coach must stay behind 2nd base and may not leave their assigned position during play. The coach may talk to individual players during dead ball periods, but are not to cause a delay of the game. All other coaches will remain in the dugout at all times (exceptions include helping catcher adjust their equipment). This rule will remain in effect until a date determined by the Farm Commissioner.

A player needing one-on-one attention in the field while on defense may be accompanied by a designated coach or parent who has received approval to do so by the Farm Commissioner.

Offensive Field Coaches: Official Little League rules specify that a team can utilize a maximum of three managers/coaches during a game, and that all other parents/adults must remain off the field and out of the dugout. However, the Farm division is unique because an adult manager/coach is required to operate the pitching machine. Under official Little League rules, at least one coach must remain in the dugout at all times to supervise the players. Teams may utilize parent volunteer(s) to supervise dugout or assist as base coach during offensive half of the inning. All parent volunteers must complete a SLL background check.

Time Limit: During the pre-season (weekday and weekend games) no game may exceed 2.0 hours regardless of the number of innings played. During the regular season, no new inning may begin after 2.0 hours and all post-season games must end within 2.5 hours. Score reverts back to the last complete inning for all games halted due to time limit.

Pitching: All players will hit from a pitching machine in order to provide pitch consistency. The pitching machine shall be operated by an offensive manager or coach who shall stay within six feet of the machine during play. The pitching machine speed shall not be changed during the game. Prior to delivering a pitch the machine operator shall hold the ball in the air to alert the defensive players of an impending pitch. No adjustments may be made to the pitching machine after the last out. The offensive coaches will keep the number of "test" pitches to a reasonable number between innings and only to calibrate the pitching machine if the pitching machine is throwing wild pitches.

Pitching and Pitching machine/operator: The home team shall install and remove the pitching machine equipment. All teams will have continuous batting – rotate bottom of batting order, no player bats last more than 2 games, and everyone gets to bat leadoff at least once.

No ball count is to be kept, therefore there are no walks. Only strikes are recorded.

During pre-season each batter will receive 5 swinging strikes. During regular season and post season each batter will receive 3 swinging strikes. Strikes must be swinging strikes, but in the

event that a batter allows three pitches through the strike zone without swinging, the plate umpire will also call non-swinging strikes.

Any batted ball that hits the pitching machine or the operator is a dead ball, the batter will proceed to first base and all base runners will advance one base. Any thrown ball that hits the pitching machine or the operator is a dead ball, any runners shall advance to the base they were heading.

Stealing is not permissible at any time.

Defensive Play and Key Position Players: The defense is able to place a total of 10 players in the field, six infielders and four outfielders. When playing only nine players, the outfield is reduced to three positions.

Each player will play 2 innings of 4, 3 innings of 5, and 4 innings of 6. If a game situation (e.g., game called for time or darkness) prevents a player from playing her/his minimum innings for any given game, then that player will play additional innings in the next game. No player will sit on the bench more than one consecutive inning.

The key positions are: Pitcher, 1st base, 2nd base, shortstop and 3rd base. A player may only play three innings in any combination of the defined key positions. When playing only nine players, the opposing manager chooses which player will remain in a key position for the entire game (and selects the position that player will play). Managers must have a written defensive line-up card available before game time. The line-up may be altered during the game, but may be inspected by the opposing manager at any time. If a team is found not following the Key Position rule, the team forgoes all runs scored in the 4th, 5th and 6th innings.

The pitcher shall play within six feet on either side of the pitching machine.

Infielders, except the pitcher, shall not encroach more than three feet onto the grass area before the ball is put into play. Outfielders will stay beyond the dirt infield area before the ball is put into play.

Stoppage of play, dead ball: During a play initiated by a batted ball, the play is over and no further advance is allowed by any runner once the defensive infielder controls the ball in front of the lead runner and forces that runner to stop at (or retreat to) an unoccupied base. During preseason, the play is over and no further advance is allowed once a defensive infielder controls the ball. An error on the return throw to the pitcher does not allow runners to advance.

The play is also dead when the ball is thrown under control back to the coach who is operating the pitching machine. The coach operating the pitching machine should stay alert to receive the ball from the other team's fielders (leave the base coaching to the coaches stationed at first and third base).

Infield fly rule will not be enforced.

T-ball & Mini-Ball-Specific Local Rules
(SLL has combined these two divisions)

Game Length: Three full innings will be played for all games--three innings at bat and in the field. Games not to exceed 1.5 hours.

Number of Players: Games can be played with a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 11 players.

Defensive Play: Defensive team puts all players in the field, with preferably 4-5 outfielders. It is encouraged that players be moved to different positions each inning. In pre-season, to be determined by the T-Ball/Mini-Ball Commissioner, no outs will be called. Players will stay on the bases even if they are tagged or thrown out. During the regular season, to be determined by the T-Ball/Mini-Ball Commissioner, if a child is thrown out at a base or tagged out, the child moves off the base and returns to his/her team bench. This way both teams understand that their goal is to throw out the batter or runner. If a fielder overthrows first, second, or third base, the runner(s) must return to their respective base(s) prior to the overthrow.

Offensive Play: Every team member bats every inning, regardless of the number of outs. The batting order should be rotated from game to game such that no player bats last more than two games and that everyone gets to bat leadoff at least once.

No scores or standings are kept.

The last batter is the clean-up batter. This batter will run a "home run" to clear the bases, regardless of the distance of the hit or the defensive play. The defensive team will attempt to make one defensive play on the hit from the clean-up batter. If an out is made it will be acknowledged by the coaches for positive reinforcement of the defensive play, but the base runners will continue to run the bases until the bases are clear. The defensive team will not attempt to make multiple outs by standing and tagging each base runner as they round all the bases during the clean-up batter. For good sportsmanship, the defensive team will remain on the field while all the base runners and the clean-up batter have finished running the bases.

There will be a specified amount of games (pre-season), to be determined by the T-Ball/Mini-Ball Commissioner, in which all managers/coaches will begin the season using the T. The T is used for all offensive at bats in accordance with Official Little League rules. An offensive coach should be at the catcher position so that he/she can place the ball on the T and adjust the height of the T for each batter. When the ball is put into play, the coach in the catcher's position should move the batting tee (and bat if necessary) to allow base runners to tag home plate safely.

The second portion of the season (regular season), to be determined by the T-Ball/Mini-Ball Commissioner, will include the transition from T hitting to Coach pitching. Coaches will pitch to their own players. Each coach will only be allowed five pitches per player. If the player cannot make contact and put the ball into play, then the coach will place a ball on the T for that batter. No strikes will be recorded, every player will get the chance to hit the ball into play. The catcher shall be a coach or a parent. When the T is used to put the ball in play, the coach/parent in the catcher's position should move the batting T (and bat if necessary) to allow base runners to tag home plate safely. To keep the flow of the game moving and to give a better opportunity for

batters to hit, coaches are not required to pitch from the rubber. They may move to a closer and safe position off the pitching rubber to allow for a more consistent ball flight for batters.

Runners should remain on base until the ball is hit.

Coaches: Defensive team coaches may coach at any position. The offensive team may have coaches or parents at first and third bases to coach base runners, and a coach or parent in the catcher's position.

Overthrows: The Overthrow will be in effect once Coach Pitch begins. The play is "dead" with the base runner(s) being awarded the base(s) that they were running towards when the overthrow occurred.

Example 1: Base runners on 1st and 2nd, the ball is put into play, and the 2nd baseman overthrows the ball to the shortstop at 2nd base, the play is "dead" with the base runners being awarded 2nd and 3rd and the batter being awarded 1st.

Example 2: Base runner at 3rd, the ball is put into play, and the 2nd baseman overthrows the ball to the shortstop at 2nd base, the play is "dead" with the base runner on 3rd being awarded home and the batter being awarded 1st.