

London & District Baseball Association (LDBA) House League Operating & Playing Rules 7U/9U

This is a non-competitive instructional division with emphasis on teaching baseball skills, having fun and to stress good sportsmanship. It is the duty of the Manager and their Coaches to teach the players to hit, field, run the bases, and the throw the ball. These skills are to be combined with overall ball etiquette on and off the field and good sportsmanship. A coach/manager may only communicate positive instructions to their players on the field.

House League Operating Rules:

PLAYER AGE GROUPING

All players must play in their own age grouping unless otherwise approved by the Board of Directors.

DIAMOND DIMENSIONS

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Division | Pitching Rubber | Between Bases |
| 7U/9U | 44' | 55' (Minor) – 65' (Major) |

PLAYING RULES

In general, LDBA follows the rules of professional baseball and as modified by the most recent edition of the Ontario Baseball Association (OBA) Playing Rules. Further exceptions are listed that apply to all age divisions and on the appropriate page where they apply to a specific Division. Please see the Baseball Ontario ON DECK App for details.

Each team shall have a catcher, a first baseman, a second baseman, a third baseman, a shortstop, a left fielder, a right fielder, one pitcher and two centre fielders in the line-up.

Infielders can ask for time in the infield area. Time will be given at the umpire's discretion when continuous action from the play has stopped. **NOTE:** The ball does not have to go back to the pitcher before an infielder may ask for time. Continuous action ends when the defense stops trying to field the baseball, and the offense stops trying to advance.

Once time has been granted by the umpire, the ball is returned to the offensive coach within the pitching circle. At this time, the plate umpire should say "Play" to make the ball live. The defensive pitcher may ask the offensive coach for the ball so they can make an appeal by tagging the base or the runner and indicating to the umpire the runner missed the base/left early/etc. The offensive coach must give the ball to the defensive player when requested. As per the Official Rules of Baseball, appeals must be made while the ball is live on either the base that was missed by a runner or the runner, as long as the defense indicates clearly than an appeal is being made.

Until the ball is fed into the machine, outfielders shall position themselves at least fifteen feet beyond the basepaths.

The plate umpire shall be behind the catcher. The second umpire is the traditional base umpire.

Up to three games may be played in one day.

GAME TIME

All regular season games start at 6:00 p.m. sharp unless scheduled otherwise or advised otherwise by the Division Convener. There will be no infield practice after 5:50 p.m. (or 10 minutes before scheduled game time). Playoff game time is 6:00 p.m. sharp. **Umpires will be instructed to allow a 15-minute grace period to a team not having the required number of players to begin the game. Teams may play with a minimum of 7 players, with automatic outs for the 8th and 9th batter, unless both teams agree to waive this rule. Players arriving late will be added to the bottom of the batting order irrespective of the inning when they arrive.**

Umpire shall be the official timekeeper or the Umpire may appoint an official timekeeper.

LENGTH OF GAMES

| Division | Full Game | Minimum Innings for Official Game | | "No New Inning after" | Curfew Time Limit (Game is over) | Mercy Rule per inning | Mercy Rule |
|----------|-----------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| | | Home Lead | Visitor Lead | | | | |
| 7U/9U | 5 innings | 2 ½ | 3 | 1hr 30 min* | 2hrs | 3 outs or 10 batters | none |

Unless otherwise agreed to by coaches at ground rules, the game will end at the specified "**curfew time limit**" (e.g., 2hrs from the first pitch for 7U/9U or 11U) even if the inning isn't complete. The player at bat when curfew is reached will be permitted to complete their turn at bat. A batter will be determined to have started their turn at bat at the moment the previous batter has completed theirs (e.g., they are called out, awarded a walk or any play as a result of their at bat has ended). The score will be that reported at the last complete inning.

For example:

7U/9U - no new inning after 90 minutes; if game is not resolved by the 2-hour mark, the game stops dead and the final score reverts to the score of the last completed inning.

7-run max per inning. No unlimited runs innings.

EXTRA INNINGS

There will be NO extra innings during the regular season. Ties will stand with each team receiving one point. Extra innings will be allowed in a playoff or tournament game.

PARTICIPATION

Since this is a development division, all players must play a different position from game to game throughout the regular season, wherever possible. The goal would be to have each player play every position during the regular season. There is no penalty for failure to do this. However, if the players are to develop and enjoy the game, time spent in various positions will encourage them.

All players participating in House League will play a minimum of three innings per game. There will be ten defensive positions, consisting of six infielders and four outfielders. Teams with only seven players in attendance at particular game may still play. All players MUST play at least 2 innings per game in a defensive position. Any player playing only two innings in a game in a defensive position is not allowed to spend both innings in the outfield. The only exception will be game ejection, injury or absence and in such cases, it must be noted on the official Game Card. Failure to adhere to this rule could result in game forfeiture.

Teams will use a continuous batting order. All players present at each game will be given a position in the batting order and they will take their regular turn at bat even when not in the defensive lineup for that inning. The batting order will be determined prior to the start of the game and will not change during the game. The batting order must **rotate** from game to game so that every player has an opportunity to bat in each position. Every player shall have the opportunity to learn as many positions as they wish and **not** be limited to only **one** position.

COACHES ON FIELD

During the first five games of the season one coach, on the defensive side, will be allowed in the grass part of the field to assist their players. After the fifth game, a defensive coach will only be allowed on the field upon mutual agreement between teams prior to the start of the game. A manager or designated coach with the offensive team will also be on the field to "feed" the balls into the pitching machine for their team while batting. ***The coach operating the pitching machine is required to wear a baseball helmet. For the purposes of this rule a skull cap is considered a baseball helmet. If Coach is a 15U aged player they must also have a chin strap.***

Penalty: the team will be warned one time to wear a helmet and for second violation or refusal to wear the helmet, the coach will be ejected.

Managers, should avoid the live play, and during the play, may not make contact with the ball or any player.

BASE RUNNERS

Runners cannot leave the base until the batter makes contact with the ball. If an infraction occurs, the ball will be declared dead and runners may not advance. One warning will be issued and for any further infractions, thereafter the runner will be called out. No stealing allowed.

There shall be no advancement of base runners until the ball is legally batted into play. EXAMPLE: No advancement on any passed ball or ball thrown into foul territory or out of bounds (out of bounds area is to be determined by the plate Umpire before the start of the game). When the ball is in foul territory or out of play, either off the catcher or overthrown, the play is called dead and the base runners ***may not advance***. This includes all diamonds whether it's a fenced diamond or not. A player cannot run on a third strike pitch dropped by the catcher.

PITCHING MACHINE RULES

The pitching machine is placed directly in front of home plate at a distance of 44 ft. An 8 ft. diameter safety circle shall be marked off directly in front of home plate and its center shall be 44 ft. from home plate. **No player is permitted to enter the safety circle which is considered a dead ball area. Enter means that any part of the body enters the safety circle.**

Electrical cord must run along or under the ground from the pitching machine to the electrical source. A ball that hits the cord outside of the safety circle shall remain live and in play.

The pitcher must stand beside the pitching machine outside of the safety circle and behind the release point of the pitching machine. Lines shall be drawn from the release point to 4 ft. beyond the circle. The pitcher must have both feet on the white line until the ball is released from the machine. Only the pitcher can return a live ball to the operating coach with runners on base. The pitcher must wear a regulation batting helmet with an attached chin strap ***and a manufacturer approved face mask***. Neither the pitcher nor any other player may in any way break the plane of the 8-ft. diameter circle around the machine whether stepping on the circle line or reaching into the circle while in an attempt to field a ball. Play will be called dead and one base will be awarded. All other forced runners will move one base.

The pitching machine speeds can be altered only at the end of an inning. Machine speed is a maximum of 40 mph and a minimum of 35 mph. Height can be adjusted at any time. No Free Pitches. If the machine speed is erratic, it shall be corrected by the umpire. (This may be done at any time.)

If a batted ball hits the pitching machine or any adult in the playing field, then the ball is declared dead and the batter is awarded first base with the corresponding move of any base runners who may be forced to move. The coach feeding the machine must not

interfere with any play being made by the defensive team. Otherwise, the batter will be called out and the runners will be returned to their base of origin. In case of the third out the side is retired.

When a thrown ball hits the pitching machine or the cord within the circle, then the ball is declared dead and each base runner (including the batter-runner) shall advance one base from the time the ball becomes dead.

The coach operating the pitching machine may instruct the batter before feeding the machine, but shall not instruct runners during the play.

Penalty: the coach shall be warned. If the action continues, the coach will be removed from the game.

BATTERS

Each batter shall receive a maximum of 5 strikes as called by the umpire. After 5 strikes called by the umpire, the batter is out. The batter shall ***not*** be called out if the 5th strike is called a foul. If a ball crosses the plate over a batter's head or bounces in the dirt, the umpire will not count it as a strike unless the player swings at the pitch. **Batters cannot walk or bunt.** (Bunts will be called an automatic out).

Infield fly rule will not apply.

Batters at 7U/9U must drop the bat and not throw it (intentionally or unintentionally) upon hitting the ball. *Penalty: each team shall be entitled to one warning per game. After the warning, any further offences by a team shall result in the batter being declared out, the ball being dead and runners returning to their bases.*

SCORING RULE

Each half inning will end either with 3 outs or after the 10th batter. The 10th batter must be declared to the umpire and defensive team, with an acknowledgement that both have heard the declaration.

If there are less than 2 out with the 10th batter at the plate, the **catcher or pitcher must have the ball and touch home plate to end the inning.** Runs scored before this count.

BALL OUT OF PLAY

On any ball thrown into foul territory or out of play, no extra base shall be awarded to the runner. The runner shall be awarded only the base they are moving to at the time of the throw. EXAMPLE: A player standing on a base or running past first base down the foul line, at the time of the throw, cannot advance to the next base. Runners will advance to the next nearest base on an overthrow including thrown balls that remain in fair territory. (While a runner is approaching second base, the defending team throws the ball over second base. The umpire will call time and the runner will be awarded

2nd base). The coaches and umpire(s) will discuss what constitutes an overthrow at each base prior to the start of the game.

CONTACT RULE

No player shall maliciously run into another player. Contact is considered malicious if it involves:

- Intentional excessive force
- Intent to injure
- Deliberate attempt by a runner to dislodge the ball
- A runner making no legitimate effort to reach the base
- A runner who could have reasonably slid or otherwise avoided contact and still reached the base

Penalty: Player is ejected from the game and declared out. This rule is to be enforced using the following guidelines:

- ***Malicious contact is to be penalized whether committed by an offensive or defensive player. When a defensive player is ejected under this rule, the runner will be called safe or out according to the result of the play.***
- ***The ball is dead and all other runners shall return to their last legally occupied base at the time of the contact.***
- ***A runner guilty of malicious contact is out even if the fielder loses possession of the ball.***
- ***A runner guilty of malicious contact after scoring a run shall not be declared out, but is still ejected from the game.***
- ***This rule applies at home plate and all other bases.***

Incidental contact between players is allowed, as long it is not malicious as defined above. The rule does not prohibit contact, but requires players to slide or make a reasonable attempt to avoid contact.

When a defensive player blocks the base path while not in the act of fielding, obstruction shall be called according to the provisions of Rule 7.06(b) (see Baseball Ontario). If this obstructed runner collides maliciously with the fielder, they would be ejected from the game. However, the obstructed runner could be called safe due to the obstruction according to the provisions of Rule 7.06(b) (see Baseball Ontario).

DESIGNATED HITTER, DESIGNATED RUNNER AND RE-ENTRY OF PLAYERS

There may sometimes be a need, due to health reasons, to compensate for a player who is unable to run, bat, etc. The Manager/Coach should discuss this with the Convener, who will review this with the Board and notify all Managers, so that the Board's decision is conveyed before games are played.

COURTESY RUNNER FOR CATCHER WITH 2 OUT

At all levels of play, courtesy runners for the catcher or any other players are prohibited.

RAIN OUT PROCEDURE

The **Home Team** Coach/Manager is responsible for checking their diamond playing condition when rain occurs. If the diamond is not suitable for play, they must notify the Umpire Assignor and visiting team manager/coach no later than **two hours** before game time. After all players are notified, **the Home Team Coach/Manager is responsible for rebooking the game within two weeks and it must be played before August 1**. The Home Team Manager must confirm this with the Division Convener.

Note: Where a game is to be rescheduled, the Local Association's Umpire Assignor and Groundskeepers should be notified by the home team coach. Also see Rescheduling of Games.

EJECTIONS

When a team has a player ejected then the ejected or injured player's spot in the batting order will be removed but not counted as an automatic out. If a team starts with 9 players and has a player injured or ejected, then they can finish with 8 players but the 9th player's spot in the batting order will be an automatic out.

Players or coaches ejected from games are subject to additional suspensions. See Suspensions.

If a player or coach is ejected, umpires must submit an LDBA Ejection Report found on the LDBA website and include an email to their UIC. The UIC will notify additional persons as necessary (Convenor, etc).

SUSPENDED GAMES

An Umpire has the right to suspend a game at their sole discretion. This could occur when a situation arises with which the Umpire is not comfortable continuing a game. This could be caused by a team and/or its supporters. In this case, the Umpire will declare the game suspended, to be resumed at a later date, as determined by the Board of Directors in conjunction with the Division Convener. Managers are urged to avoid these situations as they are not conducive to the method of operation of London District Baseball Association and may also lead to suspensions.

SUSPENSIONS

Ejection from a game for a Manager, Coach, or Player will result in an additional suspension as per the LDBA Suspension Rule as amended November 2015. The suspensions are to be served during the next scheduled games. Should there be subsequent ejections of the same person, the offending party will receive additional suspensions (as per the LDBA Suspension Rule) and may be asked to appear before the Board of Directors to show cause why they should be allowed to remain in the program.

STANDINGS

Standings will be computed on the basis of two points for a win and one point for a tie. Ties in the standings at the end of the regular season will be broken only to determine the Pennant Winner (all Divisions except 7U/9U) or if they affect the play-off pairings. Such ties will be broken by playing a single game between the two teams until a winner is declared. If more than two teams are tied, a suitable formula for breaking the tie will be put into place by the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Division Convener.

PROTESTS

No protests of an Umpire's judgment will be accepted or considered. The Coach/Manager of a protesting team shall state to the Plate Umpire 'I Protest' and state reasons for same. This shall be noted on the Game Card by the Umpire and signed by the Coach/Manager. The protest must occur at the time of the dispute and before another pitch is thrown. The plate Umpire will then announce that the game is being continued under protest. Separate statements from the Manager of the team involved and the plate Umpire of the game in question must be submitted in writing to the Division Convener within 24 hours of the completion of the game in question. A \$50.00 deposit must accompany the Manager's report, returnable only if the protest is upheld. All decisions made by the Board of Directors are final. If a protested game is to be replayed, the Board of Directors will set the time, date and place of the game.

DOUBLE HEADERS

Double Headers will only be played under extenuating circumstances and only with the approval of the Board of Directors.

SCOREBOOKS

The Home Team will keep the official score in their Scorebook listing all players participating in the game. After the game, both Coaches/Managers must sign the Scorebook. The Home Team's Manager must then call in or email the score to the Division Convener. Any Ejections of Players, Managers, Coaches or Others, are to be reported to the Convener immediately after the game.

PLAYOFFS

The playoff structure for each division will be determined by the Board of Directors in consultation with the Division Conveners.

UNIFORMS

All players will be supplied with a full uniform (including league approved hats) which shall be worn in all games played. Coaches will be provided with an appropriate team or Association jersey/shirt which shall be worn at all games played. Repeated failure to wear a league supplied uniform item may be cause for suspension. No open toe shoes allowed on the field.

EQUIPMENT

All players in all divisions with the exception of catchers will supply their own gloves.

Players in all divisions shall wear athletic supporters with protective cups. Female players shall wear pelvic protectors.

Players must not voluntarily remove their helmet. Penalty first offense - warning; second offense - ejection.

The on-deck batter, the batter and base runners must wear a prescribed protective helmet with flaps covering both ears. Chinstraps are mandatory and will be worn as designed by the manufacturer. Helmets may not be changed except after the inning has been completed, or the player has been retired or has crossed home plate.

All catchers are required to wear a mask with throat protector, helmet, chest protector, shin guards, cup and cup type supporter during the game and during any warm-up, machine set-up, etc.

The Home Team to supply a minimum of two new game balls for each regular season game and additional balls as required to complete the game.

In addition to wooden bats, metal bats shall be allowed in OBA play. These bats shall meet the dimensional requirements specified in Rule 1:10 in the Official Rules of Baseball. The maximum diameter of the bat barrel is not more than 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ ”.

The LDBA has approved bats not more than 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ ” diameter will be grandfathered and considered legal for HL play in the LDBA.

RESCHEDULING OF GAMES

No team may cancel a game with less than 24 hours notice (48 hours for Friday/Saturday/Sunday games) for any reason, except weather.

The Home Team is responsible for making arrangements of all rescheduled games. This is to be completed within two weeks of the original scheduled game **and it must be played before August 1**. The Home Team will offer the Visiting Team three makeup dates with only one of these being on a Saturday or Sunday, with the exception of teams that have Sunday as their home game night. The offered dates will be sent to the Visiting coach's and the Series Convenor's email. The Visiting Coach/Team has 72 hours from being offered to accept one of the offered dates. Failure to accept one of the dates will result in forfeiture of the game to the Home Team. The Visiting Team will accept by email copying the Series Convenor. If there is a conflict with all three dates, then the Series Convenor will make the decision to have the Home Team provide two more dates. (Playing multiple games in one week, Monday's following tournaments, etc., are not reasons to refuse dates). Fines can be levied for violations.

Note: Where a game is to be cancelled or rescheduled, the Local Association Umpire Assignor and Groundskeepers should be notified by the Home Team Coach.

COMPLAINTS

Managers and Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns and only, if necessary, contact the division Convenor, who will then consult the Board before any action is taken. The following is a list of steps which need to be taken in making a complaint:

1. Wait 24 hours (cooling off period).
2. Parents with a complaint are to first contact the Coach/Manager, and then, if necessary, the Convener. The Coach/Manager with a complaint is to first contact the Convener.
3. Once contacted by a Parent or Coach/Manager, the Convener will attempt to contact the other party to the complaint. The Convener will then explain both sides of the complaint to the Board. The Convener will advise both parties of the Board's response.
4. If a Parent or Coach/Manager is not satisfied after hearing from the Convener, they may submit a written complaint to the Board of Directors either by email, fax, or mail to LDBA. The Board will review the complaint and provide a written response, at which point the matter is considered closed.

Unless otherwise agreed, the Home team will be the official scorekeeper.

Any player advancing to play in a higher series shall be restricted to the pitching rule of the series in which they are registered. **7U/9U Ball players advancing to play in a higher series cannot pitch.**

LIGHTNING SAFETY RULE

When thunder roars, go indoors! As soon as thunder is heard, the potential to be struck by lightning is present. Baseball Ontario mandates that **at first sound of thunder**, play is to be **suspended** and all participants are to seek shelter **until 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder**.

BENCH RESTRICTION RULE

In 2016, Baseball Ontario introduced a new tool for umpires to assist with game management - the bench restriction. This rule allows an umpire to restrict a coach or manager to their bench for the remainder of the game when they commit minor violations. *See Appendix for Baseball Ontario Bench Restriction Rule*

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use and possession of electronic devices on the **playing field** is now prohibited by **all participants**. **Electronic devices may be used in the dugout**. It is critical for the safety of all participants that everyone is focused on the field of play while the game is

in progress. The use of electronic devices during a game is distracting and dangerous. Even between innings, it is still unsafe to lose focus and become distracted.

The intent of this rule is to keep everyone safe. This includes the following devices:

- Mobile phones
- Tablets
- Laptops
- Smart Watches & Fitbits

Penalty: Players, coaches, and managers will be instructed by the umpire to immediately remove them from the field of play. Failure to do so will result in ejection. Umpires who use electronic devices on the field during the game are subject to suspension and potential loss of accreditation.

Exception: *Dedicated watches, stopwatches and electronic pitch counters/indicators are permitted.*