

RIVIERA LITTLE LEAGUE

2024 NATIONAL DIVISION RULES

A. Philosophy

The National Division introduces Riviera Little League players to competitive baseball. It is the responsibility of coaches to balance competition with fairness, learning, sportsmanship and fun, so that players are likely to continue playing baseball. The first two games of the season will be coach pitch – four (4) pitches maximum unless the fourth pitch is fouled-off, in which case the batter will continue until the ball is in play or another pitch is thrown and either a swing and miss occurs, or the batter takes the pitch. One base maximum off any hit coach pitch. If the ball is not put into play after four pitches or a strikeout– the batter is out.

B. Rules

1. Pitching –

- a. The pitching distance will be 40 feet from the pitching rubber to home plate.
- b. A starting pitcher may pitch the first two (2) innings or 50 pitches in a game and all other pitchers not more than (1) inning or 50 pitches. No pitcher can start two consecutive games. Nine-year olds are not permitted to pitch in the National Division.
- c. A pitcher who is removed cannot return to pitch in the same game. Any number of pitches in an inning constitutes one (1) inning.
- d. The strike zone is between the batter’s knees and shoulders and to the inside chalk lines on either side of the plate. Coaches and umpires should remember that the objective is to PUT THE BALL IN PLAY, so the player should swing at a hittable pitch. Umpires and coaches should encourage batters to swing at pitches in the strike zone or risk being called out on strikes.
- e. In the event the pitcher causes three “Hits-by-Pitch” he will be replaced. Standard pitching rules apply and he cannot return to the game
- f. The batter is up until:
 - i. the ball has been put into play, or



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- ii. three (3) strikes have been recorded (Out)
- g. Strike calls should follow baseball rules:
 - i. Swing and a miss
 - ii. Swing and a foul ball (except for a third strike), or
 - iii. Called strike (including called third strike).
- h. When it is coach pitch the player at the pitcher's position shall be stationed to the right or to the left of the mound, with at least one foot touching the mound at the time of the pitch, and beyond the rubber. The coach is required to pitch from the pitching rubber on the mound or behind the mound.
- i. If a ball is put into play during coach pitch, the batter and any runners may advance a **maximum** of one base and cannot advance on an overthrow.
- j. The coach who is pitching shall be treated as part of the field.
- k. Rules of Play:
 1. Players will pitch to batters every inning except the first 2 coach pitch games.
 2. No walks allowed.
 3. When a batter receives a 4-ball count, the coach will complete the strike count. The umpire will continue to call balls and strikes during coach pitch.
 4. Stealing of 2nd base and 3rd base will be allowed. Only one base at a time.
 5. Runners on base during an attempted steal may not advance in the event of an overthrow.
 6. No stealing is allowed on pitches successfully caught or blocked by the catcher (i.e. can only steal on a ball that goes beyond the horizontal plane of the catcher)
 7. A batter hit by a pitched ball during a player pitch will be awarded first base.
 8. No stealing can occur during coach pitch.
 9. Runners may not advance more than one (1) base on an overthrow. *Example:* if a batter hits the ball to a fielder, and



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the fielder attempts to throw the batter out at first base and overthrows the base, the runner may advance to second base at his/her own risk. If a play is made to second base and an additional overthrow results, the player *must remain* at second base, and the play is considered over. If the runner is thrown out, the out is recorded.

2. **Batting** –

- a. The entire team will bat in rotation until three (3) outs are made or five (5) runs are scored (in which case the inning will conclude with the scoring of that fifth run).
- b. After entering the batter's box, the batter does not need to keep at least one foot in the box throughout the at bat.

3. **Fielders** – There may be (9) defensive players on the field with three of those required to be on the outfield grass.

4. **Lead-offs** – No leadoffs are permitted. Base runners may not leave the base before the pitched ball has reached the plate. If a violation occurs, the base runner shall be returned to the base he/she was at before the pitch was delivered. Violation of this rule is a judgment call and is determined solely by the umpires.

5. **Bunting** – Bunting is allowed on kid-thrown pitches only.

6. **Player Rotation** – Each player shall play a minimum of nine (9) defensive outs per game, regardless of game length. No player shall sit a second inning until every player has sat out at least one inning. Each player must play a minimum of one (1) inning in the infield per game. Penalties for failure to follow this participation rule are:

- i. **First Offense:** Written warning issued to the coach. The player shall start the next game and play the entire game defensively (in the infield if the minimum one inning in the infield was missed) to make up for the previously denied playing time.
- ii. **Second Offense:** The coach shall be suspended for one game, and at the discretion of the Board of Directors, removed for the



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remainder of the season and denied any chance of coaching in any post-season activities. The player's playing time shall be made up in the same manner as stated above.

iii. During playoffs there is **NO** circumvention of the player rotation rules, period.

7. **On – Deck Batter** – As in all divisions of Little League Baseball, an on – deck batter is not permitted.
8. **Sliding** – A runner must avoid contact at any base where a play is being made or likely to be made. As in all divisions of Little League Baseball, headfirst sliding is not allowed, except when a player is attempting to *return* to the base.
9. **Coaches** – A team shall have no more than **four adults** allowed on the field once the game starts. There must be one adult coach in the dugout at all times. All adults in direct contact with players either in game or practice must be background checked by Rivera Little League. Violations of this rule will result in a coach suspension and/or removal at the discretion of the President.
10. **Base Coaches** – The team at bat must have an adult coach as the first base and third base coach. A player may co-coach one of the two bases. The player must wear a batting helmet while base coaching.
11. **Forfeit** – If a team does not have eight (8) players on the field, ready to play at game time (refer to the umpire's watch), the game will be forfeited by that team.
 - a. In the event that one or both teams have less than nine (9) players, the following will occur:
 - i. Team managers may borrow players, of equivalent or lesser draft round, from other teams within the division. If multiplayers are missing, coaches shall replace their players in order from lowest to highest draft picks. Replacement players must play the entire game in the outfield and bat last in the lineup. The replacement player must be approved by the opposing coach and Division Player Agent.
 - ii. To ensure there is a pool of replacement players at similar skill level, all players drafted in the last three rounds of the draft will be



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eligible to replace any players on other teams. Players drafted in earlier rounds will follow normal player replacement requirements.

- iii. Undrafted players are not eligible to be used as replacement players.
- iv. A team may play a game with 8 players, however an out will be recorded for the missing batter for every missed at bat in that spot in the order. If any team has less than 8 players at any point in the game, they will forfeit the game.
- v. If eight defensive players are on the field, the last out on the offensive team will play in the outfield closest to their dugout. At the start of the game, the player chosen will be the last player in the batting rotation.
- vi. Managers cannot choose to forfeit a game unless the above forfeit criteria is met. Managers who violate this rule will be suspended for one game.
- vii.

12. Infield Fly Rule – Not in effect.

13. Scorekeeping – Only the home team’s scorekeeper will be recognized as official.

14. Conduct – All players and coaches are expected to always conduct themselves in a positive manner. Any coach or player who uses offensive language, argues with the umpire, or conducts him/herself in an unsportsmanlike manner, may be ejected from the game. If this occurs, the individual in question is subject to the penalties imposed by the RLL Board.

15. Protests – All protests will be reviewed and ruled on by the RLL protest committee. Also reviewed by District 27 where appropriate.

16. Safety – Do not allow players to play with bats while in the dugout. Put a stop to “horseplay” before someone gets hurt. The coach is required to have his team’s medical information forms at all practices and games.

17. Injuries – Any player leaving a game as result of an injury MUST have an incident and injury report filed with RLL’s Safety Officer. The player’s coach will be responsible for overseeing that this happens at the conclusion of that game.



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18. Uniforms - Teams must wear uniforms provided by RLL (i.e. jersey w/LLI Patch, hat, belt and socks) at all RLL games, unless specifically approved by the RLL Board. Coaches cannot force, encourage, or circumvent league issued apparel by directing or encouraging parents or players to purchase other than league provided items (jersey, hats, belts and socks).

19. Game Length – The game length will be six (6) innings with no new inning after 90 minutes and a drop-dead time limit of 105 minutes. In the event the game is tied after six innings, and the 90-minute threshold has not been exceeded, the game will continue subject to the timelines described above.

A: If the Drop-Dead time limit is reached then the score will revert back to the previous complete inning's score. Note: In the case that the home team ties the score in the last inning of play when drop dead time limit is reached, the score will stand & not revert to the last inning score.

B. Regular season games may end in a tie. Playoff games will continue to play until a winner is determined.

20. Games Ended By Darkness, Rain, etc. - The game shall be continued, if necessary, at the next available opportunity. If a game is called due to darkness or rain, the game shall be considered complete when a total of 4 innings are complete or 3 ½ innings, if the home team is ahead. Incomplete games may be rescheduled but not guaranteed.

21. Playoff Rules – All Little League and National Division regular season rules are in effect, except for the game length time limit – playoff games will have no new inning after 105 minutes. The National Division shall play a single-elimination playoff system to determine a Division Champion. The regular season standings determine the seeds for playoffs.

- a. League officials will determine the seeding for the playoffs. The seeding process will be modeled after the NBA Draft Lottery where each team will receive one ping-pong ball at the beginning of the season and will receive an additional ping-pong ball for each regular season loss. League Officials



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will then blindly draw the ping-pong balls for seeding order, drawing lowest seed first. The fewer balls, the higher likelihood of getting a top seed.

- b. A coin flip before each game will decide the home team.
- c. Playoff games will be 5 innings in length, unless tied after the 5th inning, in which case an additional inning(s) will be added until a winner is determined.
 - i. In the event of tie, starting with the 6th inning or any new inning after time expired, each team puts the batter who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half of the inning on second base and plays out a full inning.
- d. Beginning with the 4th inning, there is no maximum number of runs allowed. All innings started must be completed, if there is a 10-run differential after the 4th inning a mercy rule will end the game.

22. Undrafted Players

1. All players that register after the draft will be assigned to teams at random. Player/Coach requests for placement of an undrafted player will require approval by the league player agent and RLL Executive Board. If necessary, an evaluation may be performed to confirm there is not a significant competitive advantage.

Updated 12/22/23

