

MLBA Minor (10U, 3rd/4th Grade) Division

Division Overview:

This division is non-competitive and instructional. Division standings are not kept. Kid pitch.

Points of Emphasis: learning to pitch and play the catcher position, base running (secondary leads and advancing on passed balls) and improving Baseball IQ.

***For 2025, see Addendum for Game Format Improvement recommendations that we will be testing.*



Primary Fields (46/60 distances): Dixon, Middle, Markham Minor, Howe

1. Games

- 1.1. All players, managers, coaches, parents and spectators will follow the MLBA Code of Conduct, a copy of which is located at lebobaseball.org.
- 1.2. Game is 6 innings or 2 hours in length.
- 1.3. No new inning shall begin after playing 1 hour and 45 minutes or more.
- 1.4. If the game is called at a half-inning because the 2-hour limit has been reached, the score will revert to the previous full inning.
- 1.5. The last game of the day for each field will not be subject to time limit (except for darkness).
- 1.6. Managers should decide together (along with umpire) whether to call a game because of weather or darkness, once the game has started.
- 1.7. Game scorebook will be kept to determine the batting order and run limit per inning. Player and Team **effort** is to be encouraged and **results** diminished. Excellent Sportsmanship is expected to be taught and displayed by all coaches.
- 1.8. Both managers will be responsible for the preparation of the field for play prior to start and at the end of the game.
- 1.9. Each team will supply 1 new game baseball to the umpire at the start of the game.
- 1.10. Every effort should be made to play games as scheduled; however, in the event of a cancellation it is the Home team manager's responsibility to contact the **League Director** to notify umpires ASAP.
- 1.11. Rain-outs prior to the start of the game will be rescheduled as time and fields allow. Games called due to darkness will not be rescheduled.
- 1.12. All cancelled games should be reported to the **League Director** so that games can be placed on the reschedule list.
- 1.13. No games shall be rescheduled in place of practice time, unless approved by **League Director**.
- 1.14. No more than three (4) coaches and one scorekeeper are permitted on the field or in the dugout during games.
- 1.15. There is a "zero tolerance" rule in effect for arguing with or criticizing any umpire. There are no appeals, all umpire decisions are final. This applies to managers, coaches, players, and parents.
- 1.16. **Youth Umpire primary responsibilities are:** 1. Call Ball/Strike 2. Fair/Foul 3. Catch/No Catch 4. Safe/Out.

2. Game Play

- 2.1. Little League Baseball rules of play apply except as set forth in these rules.
- 2.2. Pitching distance is 46ft and Bases are 60ft.
- 2.3. Innings 1-5, a team will bat until five runs have scored or three outs have been made. Runs scoring after the fifth run will not be counted (no continuation runs).
- 2.4. In the last inning of a game, each team will bat until three (3) outs are made (no run-limit).
- 2.5. Bunting will be allowed, but no swinging bunts will be permitted. Batters may not show bunt and then swing away.
- 2.6. **No** infield fly or dropped 3rd strike rule.
- 2.7. With 2 outs, a courtesy runner is allowed for player designated to catch the next inning.

3. **Players**

- 3.1. All players will bat in a consecutive and continuous order. *It is recommended that coaches regularly rotate the batting order (e.g., reverse order from previous game, on-deck batter at end of game is leadoff for next game, etc.)*
- 3.2. No more than 10 players will play in the field, with no more than 4 infielders, excluding the pitcher and the catcher. Teams may play only 4 outfielders at a time. There is not a rover position and you must play L, LC, RC, R field positions in a general arc with outfielders at least 20 feet beyond the base paths.
- 3.3. To promote the instructional nature of the league, no player should sit out for 2 consecutive innings or more than a total of 2 innings per six-inning game. *No player should sit out a 2nd inning until all players have sat at least 1 inning.*
- 3.4. Additionally, every player should play **at least** 1 inning in the **infield** (not including pitcher) and 1 inning in the **outfield**.
- 3.5. No player may play the same position for more than two consecutive innings.
- 3.6. **Players in the field may not switch positions during an inning unless a pitching change or injury occurs.**

**Coaches should use their best judgement with regards to safety when positioning players on defense while trying to stay within the spirit of these rules.*

- 3.7. A player arriving late for a game will be inserted immediately into the last spot in the batting order.
- 3.8. A team must have 8 players to start a game. In order to have a minimum of 8 players, a team may pick up a Pinto Call-up/Pool Player (list is available on website) from any district.
- 3.9. **Call-ups or Pool Players must bat last and play the outfield.** Pinto “call-up” players may not pitch, catch, or play the infield.
- 3.10. A game is forfeited if a team is unable to field 8 players within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time. **AVOID THIS!**
- 3.11. You may obtain substitutes (call-up or pool players) to get you to a maximum of 10 players.
- 3.12. Only MLBA-registered players may be used as substitutes.

4. **Base Running**

- 4.1. **Stealing is not permitted.** Base runners **may attempt to advance** to the next base (only 1 base) on a passed ball or wild pitch (except home). ****Definition of a Passed Ball or Wild Pitch for this rule:** Any ball that is not caught and comes to rest either behind the catcher (towards the backstop) or more than an arms-length away in front or to the side of the catcher. If a catcher can secure a ball to the side or front of him quickly with reasonable effort, base-runners should not attempt to advance. Emphasis should be on instructing baserunners on Secondary Leads.
- 4.2. A player may not leave the base until the ball passes home plate. There will be a warning for first infraction per team for leaving a base early and 2nd infraction will result in a dead ball and runner being called out.
- 4.3. A player may not advance home on a passed ball or wild pitch.
- 4.4. A player may not score from third base unless the ball is put into play by the batter (or by award for a ball leaving the field of play).
- 4.5. Baserunners may not advance on the throwback to the pitcher from catcher.
- 4.6. If a player walks, he must stop at first base and cannot advance to second until another pitch has been thrown.
- 4.7. **NO HEAD FIRST SLIDES.** However, a runner may dive back to a base after passing it (even if the player misses the base and is returning to it). This is not considered a head-first slide.
- 4.8. Play will be dead and runners may not advance once an infielder has the ball under control on or near the pitcher’s mound.
- 4.9. **“Avoid Contact Rule”**
 - 4.9.1. Players will be encouraged to slide on close plays. If there is, in the umpire’s judgment, more than incidental physical contact on a play at a base the runner will be declared out.
 - 4.9.2. This is an “avoid contact” rule, **not** a “no contact” rule. Thus, a player will not automatically be called out simply for making contact with a fielder.

5. **Overthrows**

- 5.1. Base runners will be allowed to advance 2 bases on an overthrow that leaves the field of play (out of play). The Umpire will determine base runners positioning as follows: first throw from the infield- award 2 bases from runner position(s) at time of the pitch; second throw from infield or any throw from outfield- award 2 bases from runner position(s) at the time of the throw (release).
- 5.2. If batted ball is overthrown and does not go beyond the field of play, base runners can advance as many bases, even home, at their discretion until the baseball is under control on or near the pitcher’s mound.

5.3. Base runners may not advance beyond the base they were going to on an overthrow from the catcher on a runner's attempt to advance on a passed ball or wild pitch.

6. Pitching

- 6.1. A player may pitch **only 2 innings per game**, and, only 6 innings per 7-day period. One pitch thrown will count as an inning pitched for this designation.
- 6.2. The manager or coach **must replace** a pitcher if he/she hits 2 batters in an inning, 3 batters in two innings or on the 3rd visit to the mound in the same inning. In addition, to keep the flow of the game moving, a pitcher must be removed if the pitcher **walks three (3) consecutive batters in one inning or 4 total walks in an inning** (a HBP is also considered a walk or base on balls).
- 6.3. Once removed from the pitching position, a player may not return to pitch in that game.

*Managers should use good judgment to remove struggling pitchers who reach or exceed approximately 40 pitches in an outing or who seem to be experiencing any discomfort in their arms, regardless of what they tell you.

- 6.4. No intentional walks. Violations are cause for the Pitcher's removal from that position by umpire/coach.
- 6.5. **First Year Division players** (8-9 year olds) must pitch at least two innings per game during the regular season.
- 6.6. At least one (1) inning of the pitching requirement for First Year players **must be met in the first 4 innings of a game**. If a First Year pitcher is removed because of the "hit-by-pitch" or walk rule, it will count as one inning pitched.
- 6.7. For the purposes of the First Year player pitching requirement: **One Inning = 3 outs, 3 consecutive walks or 4 total walks, 2 HBP or 5 runs allowed**.
- 6.8. **Rule 6.5 is not in effect during playoff games**. Managers are not required to pitch first year players during playoff or tournament games.
- 6.9. No pitcher may throw (or attempt to throw) curve balls. First violation is a ball or, if batter hits safely, batter's choice to let play stand. Continued violations are cause for removal from position by the coach or umpire. If umpire determines that a player has a natural break due to his/her natural pitching motion, then this is allowed in the discretion of the umpire.
- 6.10. To encourage quick play, **pre-inning warm ups shall be restricted to 5 pitches**. Coaches may assist umpires with this to encourage quick play.
- 6.11. Any violation of these pitching rules, knowingly or unknowingly, will result in disciplinary action by the MLBA Board of Directors.

7. Equipment

- 7.1. Baseball: AD Starr- AD100
- 7.2. Bat size: maximum 2 1/4" or 2 5/8" barrel **with USA Bat Stamp only**, not more than 32 inches. No differential requirement. Wood bats are permitted. See website for MLBA bat rules.
- 7.3. One warning per team and after that, batter will be called out (dead ball) for throwing the bat, if deemed by the umpire to be a safety issue.
- 7.4. **Mandatory helmets with face masks** will be worn by batters, on-deck batters, and base runners at all times. Player will not be allowed to bat or run bases without a helmet with face mask.
- 7.5. All pitchers must wear a Heart Guard. Each team has been provided one with equipment.
- 7.6. No metal spikes.

8. Ground Rules

- 8.1. The MLBA will establish specific ground rules for each field (available on website), but there will be no home run line (except where governed by fences at Dixon, Howe, Markham, etc.). On a batted ball that goes beyond the outfielders the runners may advance as far as they choose provided there are no obstacles to field the ball (i.e. Hoover left field in which case the school should be a book rule double, if untouched).

PLAYOFF RULES

1. A team must have 8 players to start the game.
2. In order to have a minimum of 8 players, a team may pick up no more than 2 Call-up or poole players from their district (and only one of those may be a Pinto travel player, unless the opposing manager consents).
 - 2.1. A list of Call-ups/Pool players is available on website and the Commissioner must approve participation.
 - 2.2. Call-ups or Pool Players must bat last and play the outfield. Pinto “call-up” players may not pitch, catch, or play the infield.
3. Managers must identify their call-ups before the game to the umpire and opposing manager.
4. Innings 1-4, a team will bat until five runs have scored or three outs have been made. Runs scoring after the fifth run will not be counted (no continuation runs). In subsequent innings, each team will bat until three (3) outs are made.
5. The First Year Division Player Pitching requirement **is not in effect** during the playoffs.
6. The playoff tournament will be single elimination both within each school and among the school champions. Byes and pairings for the tournament will be set randomly.
7. Please consult with the MLBA Rec League Director if you have any questions.

DO'S & DON'TS FOR MANAGERS AND COACHES

- **DO** introduce yourself to the umpire and other manager.
- **DO** keep in mind that you are there to help control the emotion that accompanies participation in the game.
- **DO** inform your parents and coaches of their responsibility to maintain proper decorum.
- **DO** have your players dressed properly and ready to go at game time.
- **DO** encourage your players to help keep the playing area clean, i.e., throw away the gum wrappers and empty drink cans, etc.
- **DO** use proper language at all times.
- **DO** treat your players with respect.
- **DO** address only favorable comments to or about the other team's players, coaches and managers.
- **DO** avoid running up the score.
- **DO NOT YELL AT YOUR PLAYERS.** Yelling does not enhance performance.
- **DO NOT EVER UTTER the six words that are banned from the playing field by a manager or coach: Safe, Out, Fair, Foul, Ball or Strike.** Only an umpire should use these words.
- **DO NOT** question the umpire's judgment calls or his/her strike zone.
- **DO NOT use gamesmanship or try to “work” the umpires. Your mission is to help your players improve while encouraging good sportsmanship.**

ADDENDUM

2025 Minor Division (10U, 3rd/4th Grade) Game Format Improvement Guidelines

In an effort to improve the overall experience in our Minor 10U Division for players of all skill levels, coaches and parents, we will be testing the following changes in game format to improve the speed of play, create more offensive and defensive opportunities by having more batted balls "in play", and provide additional positive play/experience feedback. These changes will also allow for additional "reps" in a game-like environment when practice times are at a minimum.

1. **Innings 1-2:** A designated Adult coach/parent or High School-age volunteer will pitch to both teams. Designated pitcher should be able to throw as many strikes as possible while varying the speed of pitches to be appropriate for the skill level of the batter. The goal is to give each hitter as many pitches to hit as possible. Designated pitcher can be different for each team or the same volunteer for both teams (at coaches' discretion).
2. **Innings 1-2:** Each team will bat, at least, their whole roster (or up to the roster # of opposing team, whichever is higher).
3. **Innings 1-2:** At bats will be treated as normal at-bats, with 3 strikes as an out or 4 balls as a base-on-balls (Youth Umpire will call balls/strikes). **Exception: If a player strikes out (called or swinging), they will have the opportunity to hit one (1) ball off the tee or soft toss and the result of the batted ball will be accepted, out or safe (swing and miss = out; foul ball = another chance).
4. **Innings 1-2:** A batted ball will be played upon by the defense and outs recorded as normal and runners will advance at the risk of being put out; After 3 outs or 5 runs scored, if the offensive team has not batted their roster (see rule #2), bases will clear and offensive team will continue to hit until 3 outs are made AND full roster or equivalent has batted.
5. **Innings 1-2:** Defensive substitutions may be made after 3 outs or 5 runs.
6. **Innings 1-2:** All runs scored will count per Minor Division (10U) baseball rules.
7. **Innings 3-6:** Play will follow current Minor Division (10U) rules. *Rule language, specifically related to pitching, will need to be updated to accommodate any changes recommended in this proposal.
8. ***These rules apply during regular season game-play NOT playoff or tournament games.**
9. An effort should be made by every coach/team to incorporate this Game Improvement format from the start of the season thru mid-May, depending on schedule (ideally the first half of the season's games will be played with this structure).