

LSYB A1 Division Rules of Play
Updated March 26, 2025

1. General Rules

- Scores will not be recorded
- Team standings will not be kept
- Focus is on having fun, developing individual baseball skills and learning to love the game
- Team goals should be to play together as a team and meet new friends. Coaches should strive to have all kids return the next baseball season.

2. Game Format

- Games end after 6 innings, daylight permitting, or hard stop at 1hr 30 minutes after start time. No new innings start after 1hr 20 minutes of play.
- In the beginning of the season, each team bats through the lineup once and then switch sides, regardless of outs or runs. That will encourage more reps per kid and in that case, the fielding team should “count outs” to see how many outs they can get in one inning. As season progresses, you may discuss with other coaches and consider playing three outs or five runs per team per inning (but only if both sides agree).

3. Pitching

- Coaches pitch to their players.
- No called strikes or balls.
- Coaches pitch from one knee. The reason is that we want kids hitting balls incoming on a straight trajectory. Not a looping arc or underhand throws. Pitchers should throw the ball straight as it encourages good hitting habits.
- Guideline: Make the 10-pitch rule clear to all players prior to a game just in case you need to implement this rule so there are no surprises. However, it is not a hard and fast rule. You will need to use good judgement with this as we want to encourage a player to make contact and feel success from all their hard work. Some kids need a few extra. Once you start to hear grumblings from the fielders it can get uncomfortable fast for you but more so for the batter. So, giving a kid a base may save face in the end.

4. Batting

- All players get an at bat in the lineup. Rotate the batting order each inning if batting through the lineup
- Only the batter has bat at plate, no bat for the on deck batter (too risky); all kids stay in dugout.
- No bunting
- Each team should have a bench coach (an Adult) to help the kids know the batting order and to make sure the kids keep their hands off the bats.
- Any player can bring a bat to practice or a game. The one condition is that they need to let teammates also use the bat. It becomes a team bat until practice/game has ended. If the bat owner doesn't like it, then keep them at home.
- It is recommended that players provide their own helmets for sanitary reasons, but the coach will also have a few team helmets for everyone to use if needed.

5. Base Running

- Batters/Runners advance one base at a time. Near the end of the season discuss with the opposing manager prior to game to allow batters/runners to advance two bases on a hit to outfield.
- No sliding, stealing, leading, no advance on overthrows – runners may only leave the base after the ball is hit.
- Runners are responsible for avoiding running into fielders.
- Only coaches should be at 1st and 3rd base coaching boxes (no kids)

6. Fielding

- All players on the field each inning – 7-9 positions
- Everyone should get similar playing time at each position. No catchers. There is a preference for only one

pitcher's helper, although if you need to have 2, have them play to the left and right of the mound (one foot on the dirt). Be mindful of the hitter. Adjust your players accordingly for a strong batter to avoid injury.

- Exceptions to equitable playing time should be made with respect to 1st base. We want kids who can protect themselves and who can catch the ball playing that position. Teach your kids to put their foot on the side of the base, NOT step on the middle of the base. Practice proper first base technique and catching with every player during every practice so they are better prepared for the game!
- Encourage fielders to make an out by throwing, not simply always running to tag a base or player.

7. Catching

- Generally, there are no catchers other than a coach during a game. It takes too long to put on gear and kids at this age still throw the bat and catchers can barely catch themselves. Risk of injury is high. It would be rare but maybe one kid might be ready by the end of the season to be with a coach well behind the plate to shag missed pitches. Generally, that is as far as you will want to push it – please discuss with the commissioners if you'd like to introduce catching. Boys must wear a protective cup. Girls a pelvic protector. Use your weekend practices to introduce the catching position.

8. Sportsmanship.

- Discuss being a good sportsman before every game. No player should taunt, critique, tease, laugh at...etc another player. Only encouraging words are allowed when speaking to a teammate. A defensive player cannot say anything negative to an offensive player or vice versa – this is important as kids get older. Typically, the spot where this comes up is a player who misses 10 pitches in a row at bat and fielders start becoming impatient. We are all friends and future teammates. This league is for players of all abilities and interests. Respect for those trying is a value we want to foster. If someone is not being respectful, use that as a learning moment for your next team huddle.