

San Francisco Little League Baseball Farm Rules

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SFLL will follow Official Little League rules in the Farm Division with the "local" modifications described below. It is the responsibility of each coach to read the 2008 Little League Baseball Rules and to understand at least the most basic rules in addition to the following local rules.

In point of fact, many of the noted rules are in compliance with the national Little League rules, but they are noted here for ease of reference for coaches. In other cases, the rules below are local modifications of national rules.

Safety: Anyone playing catcher needs to be wearing a cup. You should also be mindful of the catcher keeping a safe distance from the batter. Kids in farm have a tendency to approach the ball to catch it, and can end up in the batter's wheelhouse.

No one touches a bat except for the kid batting. There is no on-deck circle.

Minimum Playing Time:

* - All players play in the field every inning. The correct defensive formation is to allow four outfielders.

Rotate The Batting Order: Don't bat the same player in the same spot in the lineup each game.

* - Bat through the roster (establish a batting order of all your players prior to the game and everyone bats in that order) Suggestion: Put your batting order together in a spreadsheet, date it and each week slide the top name to the bottom of the order. Use the same sheet to show what position each kid will play in each inning. When you shift the batting order every week, simply leave the fielding assignments where they are and everyone will have the same experience.

Additional Playing Rules:

* - Once the entire lineup has batted, the side is retired. For upper and lower farm, we will bat through the order. If a player or runner is out, they return to the dugout, but everyone bats.

Note: The rationale for not ending an inning after 3 outs is that we are a developmental league, and we want to guarantee the kids the maximum chances in the field and at bats per game. Please do not resort to coaches' meetings before games to decide which rules to follow each week. Consistency is important for kids this age.

- * - No strikeouts-everyone hits the ball
- * - No walks, unless neither coach has a tee, and the batter has not hit the ball after 7 pitches.
- * - No scores kept and no standings
- * - No base stealing - player must remain on the base until the ball is hit
- * - Bunting – seriously frowned upon. The idea should be to have kids swing and hit the ball.
- * - Coach pitch- no pitching machines allowed (the coach who is pitching should find a distance that works, doesn't have to be from the mound, should be somewhere closer. But please remember to be on your toes- because it's a live ball.
- * - Ten players in the field - a catcher and a player in the pitchers position behind the coach who is pitching, off to the side, four outfielders.

Regarding the No Strikeout rule: In order to keep the game moving there is a limit to the number of pitches to any one batter. Each batter gets seven (7) pitches- either a swing and miss, or a take - and then the batter hits off a tee. In the absence of a tee, the batter takes first base and we move on to the next hitter. Obviously it would be preferable to make sure there is a batting tee available at the game. If you get to the point where a player will be given a free pass, it is important to place the blame on the poor quality of pitching. Self-deprecating humor is welcome here, but it is far better to have everyone reach base on a hit.

Regarding the catcher position: Hopefully you are encouraging players to want to try their hand at being a catcher. A very exciting position to play! During the games, though, at this level, we should try to keep from wearing our catchers out. There will be a lot of passed balls. Remember there is no base stealing. A suggestion: keep your catcher from running after every ball that gets by. Have a parent stand at the edge of the backstop, out of harms way, with an extra ball or two. When the ball gets by the catcher that parent can throw a ball back to the coach who is pitching and retrieve the passed ball at an opportune time.

Tips on pitching: Pitch overhand. Take a knee if it helps you deliver the ball on a more level plane. Throwing the ball with an underhand motion will be confusing to the kids. It is best to simulate the release point they will be getting used to over the next several years. If you are seriously tall, then invest in a kneepad, or use your glove as one. It is much harder for a young ballplayer to hit an eephus or lob pitch than one that is delivered along a normal trajectory.

Minimum Number of Players: There are ten players in the field plus a coach who is pitching. If a team only has eight players: start the game minus the player who would be in the pitcher position. That way all the kids who are present get to remain on their respective teams. If it falls below eight, use a player from the opposing team in an outfield position. Rotate in a different kid each inning to fill

your position. When a borrowed fielder's turn in the batting order comes up, move someone into the field for him.

Rotate positions: Let the kids have an opportunity to play at every position to which they have expressed an interest. Set up a simple spreadsheet chart (by inning, by position, etc. -) and keep track of where the kids play. That way you'll be on top of these logistical matters.