

# 2025 BEDFORD COUNTY YOUTH BASEBALL RULES OF PLAY

## OFFICIAL RULES

### 1. RULES OF PLAY

Any situation not covered in this set of rules will fall to the Official Little League Baseball Rules and Regulations.

#### 1.1 GENERAL RULES FOR ALL BASEBALL DIVISIONS

##### 1.1.1 FORMAL DEFINITIONS OF “DAY” AND “WEEK”

1. Day: the term “day” refers to a calendar day, which begins at midnight and ends at midnight the following evening.
2. Week: the term “week” generally refers to a calendar week which runs from Sunday to Saturday.

##### 1.1.2 BATS

3. In agreement with the safety concerns identified by the Little League Organization ([http://www.littleleague.org/Little\\_League\\_Online.htm](http://www.littleleague.org/Little_League_Online.htm)), bats which are not approved by the official Little League (“USA Stamped”) will not be allowed for use in inter-league play. There will be no specific date set for this action. Simply, if a bat is not approved by the Little League Organization, it is not allowed for use in inter-league play. For the sake of convenience, a copy of the bat list should be printed on or about the opening day of the season and kept in each press box. The only exception to this rule is the use of a wood bat.
4. The opposing coach may appeal to the umpire for a bat inspection if he/she suspects a bat is unapproved. If the batter has already stepped into the batter’s box and the bat is found to be unapproved, the batter is out. The appeal must take place during the at-bat and cannot take place after the at-bat is complete. Any further infractions of this rule (2<sup>nd</sup> time coming to plate with an unapproved bat), will result in a team forfeit of the game.

##### 1.1.3 PITCHING

5. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of three (3) innings per game and a maximum of nine (9) innings per week. Failure to follow this rule will result in a forfeiture of the game. One (1) thrown pitch is considered one (1) inning pitched.
6. A pitcher may not re-enter the pitching position in the same game.
7. There will be no called balks on pitchers.
8. If a pitcher hits two (2) batters in one inning, his/her coach will be warned. Upon hitting a third (3) batter in the same inning he/she will not be allowed to continue pitching in the game. Upon hitting a third (3) batter in the game, his/her coach will be warned. Upon hitting a fourth (4) batter in the game, he/she will not be allowed to continue pitching in the game.

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9. Any pitcher who intentionally throws at a batter will be ejected from the game and at the League President's discretion may be suspended for a number of games or indefinitely from the league depending on the severity of the situation.
10. A player may not be intentionally walked.
11. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to the mound in one inning, a coach must change pitchers.

### 1.2 BASE RUNNING

12. All base runners must remain on occupied bases until the pitched ball crosses home plate. The penalty for the first (1) offense is a team warning and the offending base runner is returned to the original base if it is not occupied. If occupied, he/she will be placed on the next unoccupied base. The Penalty for the second (2) and subsequent offenses is that the offending base runner is out. If it is the third (3) out of the inning, no runs can score on that play. If a play is made on the base runner violating this rule and the base runner is out, the out stands and all other base runners return the bases they occupied before the pitch was made.
13. A base runner must slide into a base (except First Base) if a play is being made. Fake tags by the fielder will result in an ejection of that player. A base runner who does not slide may be ejected from the game, at the umpire's discretion, for any contact made with the player making the tag.
14. All slides must be feet first (no head first), except where a base runner is making a quick return to the previous base.
15. If there are two (2) outs, a courtesy runner will be allowed for the player who will be playing the catcher position. The courtesy runner will be the person who made the last out. In the event of an injury, a courtesy runner will also be allowed, again with the courtesy runner being the person who made the last out. In the event that there are no outs in the inning at the time of the injury, the last out will be from the previous inning. In the event that there is no previous inning, the courtesy runner will be the determined as the player farthest from that point in the line-up.
16. Stealing is permitted in the 10U and 12U divisions. With respect to stealing Home, the following additional discussion is provided: A player on third base who turns back towards third base MUST return to third base before he/she may steal home, except on a subsequent overthrow to the pitcher. Once the pitcher has the ball securely and is on the rubber of the mound, all runners not explicitly in the process of a steal must return to their base. In the 10U division, a player may steal home only on passed balls and overthrows. In the 12U division, there are no special stipulations for stealing home.
17. If a base runner misses a base, the defensive team must appeal to the umpire for the out.
18. The base runner may not hurdle or jump over a play to avoid a tag.

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19. There will be no use of the Little League® special pinch runner rule.

### 1.3 DEFENSIVE

20. A player's feet must be in the field of play (does not mean 'fair territory only, rather indicates within the fence and not in a dead ball area, such as the dug-out) at the time he/she catches the ball for the batter to be out. If the fielder catches the ball in the field of play, then carries into a dead ball area, all runners will be awarded one base.
21. Any ball remaining in the field of play is live and runners may advance as far as possible at their own risk
22. The following constitutes a one (1) base award: A) thrown ball going under the fence in foul territory; B) thrown ball going in the dug-out; C) thrown ball becoming entangled in the fence, backstop, or other dead ball area obstruction.
23. Any ball thrown that goes under or over the fence in fair territory shall result in a two (2) base award.
24. Players may not go into, on, or behind the dug-outs in pursuit of balls.
25. The INFIELD FLY RULE is in effect to be called at the umpire's interpretation of a reasonably catchable ball. There is no appeal if not called. The key elements in applying the Infield Fly Rule are:
  - 25.1 There must be less than two (2) outs.
  - 25.2 There must be runners on first and second OR first, second and third.
  - 25.3 The fly ball cannot be a bunt or line drive.
  - 25.4 An infielder must be able to catch the ball *with ordinary effort* (umpire's discretion).
  - 25.5 The ball is still live when the Infield Fly Rule is in effect; runners may advance at the risk of being caught or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, same as a regular fly ball.
  - 25.6 If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul ball.

### 1.4 LINE-UP

26. Free substitution is allowed. However, there can be no change to the batting order. All re-entries must be on defense.
27. There will be no designated hitter; extra hitters are permitted.
28. All teams must field at least eight (8) players. Less than eight (8) players will result in a forfeit. In the event of a team playing with eight (8) players, they must take an out in the ninth (9) position in the batting order.
29. All players who will be playing in the game must be on the line-up at the beginning of the game as provided to the opposing coach.

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30. In the event of a player injury, with no other substitutes available, a team is not required to take an out for an injured player. In this instance, the injured player may not re-enter the current game or any other game on the same day.

### 1.5 MANDATORY PLAY RULE

31. During the course of a regular game, each player in attendance must play at least two (2) innings in the field and have at least one (1) at-bat. If the home team does not bat in the bottom half of the last inning, a player entering the game in the top of the fourth (4) inning shall be considered to have played two (2) full innings. Any player playing less than as outlined above must start the next game and play at least three (3) innings in the field and have at least one (1) at-bat.

### 1.6 MERCY RULE

32. In the event that one team is ahead by twelve (12) runs after four (4) innings [or three and  $\frac{1}{2}$  (3.5) innings if the home team is in the lead], the game will be declared final. In the event of a double-header, the run differential is reduced to ten (10). The home team must have an equal number of at-bats if it is losing.

### 1.7 PROTESTS

33. All protests must be made immediately after the violation and must be made known to the head umpire. The protest must be made in writing. No protest shall be made on a decision play, just a rule violation. If the League upholds a protested game, the game shall be resumed from the point of protest.

### 1.8 UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

34. No steal-cleated shoes are allowed.
35. All players must be in complete uniform. The exception being for those players who are 'playing-up' due to injury or illness; they will be in the uniform of the team to which they were drafted.
36. A catcher in full gear is required. The catcher must assume the normal catcher position (squat). The use of a protective cup is required.
37. All base runners must wear protective headgear. At the discretion of the umpire, a base runner may be called out if he/she intentionally removes his/her headgear.

### 1.9 PLAYER CONDUCT

38. Any player that throws a bat, helmet or other equipment, whether accidentally or on purpose may be ejected from the game at the umpire's discretion.

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39. Any player who swears or continually disrupts the game through abusive or harassing language shall automatically be ejected from the game.

### 1.10 OTHER

40. Each team must keep its equipment out of the field of play.
41. Spectators may not be in the enclosed area, or behind the backstop (other than as seating may be arranged).
42. Players must remain in the dug-out when not on the playing field with the exception of the on-deck' batter who will warm-up in the designated location. Players may leave the general field area to use the lavatory or to get a drink. Absolutely no food is to be brought into the dug-out.
43. If a game is suspended, it will resume at the same point. A game is not considered complete unless four (4) innings have been completed or three and ½ (3.5) if the home team is ahead. Player eligibility shall remain unchanged. Only pitchers eligible for the suspended game may be eligible for resumed play.
44. Coaches shall be permitted to coach first (1) and third (3) bases. Coaches must remain within the designated coach's box at all times. The exception shall be a coach moving out of the way to allow a defensive player to make a play on a batted or thrown ball. If in the umpire's judgment the coach interferes with a fielder in the act of making a play on a batted or thrown ball, the umpire shall call the batter or runner out and the ball shall be dead. The coach may not touch his own base runner. The umpire may call the base runner out in this instance.
45. The Fake Bunt, where the batter turns to bunt, then pulls back and swings away is not allowed. A player who does this will be called out, the play is dead and runners cannot advance.
46. A player who throws the bat after a hit will result in a team warning. A second offense, by any player, will result in an out, the play is dead, and runners cannot advance.
47. There is no "dropped third strike" rule in effect for any division.
48. Competition-grade baseballs are required for all games; no practice balls should be used during games.
49. Forfeited games will result in a losing score of 5-0 for the losing team.
50. For games that are postponed (due to weather or other circumstances): it is the responsibility of the head coach of the home team to provide three (3) dates and times for make-up games; the head coach of the visiting team has five (5) days to respond to the proposed dates and times. If a date is agreed upon and one of the teams does not show for the make-up game, the absent team forfeits the game.

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51. Tie-breaker rules will be as follows: 1.) the result of the head-to-head game between the two teams that are tied, 2.) Total runs allowed on the season, 3.) Total runs scored on the season.
52. Coaches have two (2) days after a game is played to completion to enter game scores and other required stats on the county league website.
53. In regards to the End of the Year Tournaments: younger players are permitted to play up a division if a team needs players to compete in the tournament, but players cannot move to other teams in the same division.

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### **12U SPECIFIC RULES**

54. A 10U player is eligible to play up at the 12U level in order to have enough players.
55. A team may bat as many players as they want.
56. No new inning shall be started after 1 hour 45 minutes from the official game start.
57. Plate umpires are required to call balls and strikes from behind home plate.
58. There **MUST** be at least one plate umpire and one field umpire officiating a 12U game.

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### 10U SPECIFIC RULES

59. No 12U aged players are permitted to play in the 10U division unless there is a special exception granted to a player by the Competition Committee.
60. No 8U player can play in a 10U division game except in the case where a 10U team does not have enough players. When selecting an 8U player to participate in a 10U game, the selection should take into account player safety and (where possible) older players should be given the first opportunity to play. An 8U player cannot play the pitcher or catcher positions; they must also bat at the bottom of the order. If an 8U player is pulled-up in anticipation of not having a full roster and then the 10U team fields a full roster of 10U players, the 8U player should be permitted to leave. If necessary for the 8U player to stay, they may play a maximum of two innings and may not start the game. The exception would be for an injury to a 10U player. An 8U player may not be pulled up explicitly to play as an extra hitter. There cannot be more 8U players in the game than there are 10U players out of the game.
61. If there are at least ten (10) players on the lineup, the coach must use four (4) outfielders. This cannot be changed, barring injury, during the game. If four (4) outfielders are used, they must be played in the normal positions (no rover).
62. An inning will end with three (3) outs, seven (7) runs, or if the at-bat team bats through their order; whichever of these conditions is met first. However, during the last inning of a game, an unlimited number of runs may be scored. The last inning will be determined by either the maximum number of innings for 10U competition or when the time limit is near; the home coach is responsible for a conference with the umpire and visitor coach to set the last inning due to the time limit. However, the visiting coach may also initiate the conference. The umpire will be responsible for any final determination.
63. No new inning shall be started after 1 hour 45 minutes from the official game start
64. Plate umpires are required to call balls and strikes from behind home plate.
65. There MUST be at least one plate umpire and one field umpire officiating a 10U game.



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### 1.11 8U (COACH PITCH) RULES

#### 66. Field markings

66.1 There must be one circle with a 20 foot diameter (10 foot radius) around the pitcher's mound

66.2 The coach who is pitching will pitch from a line marked 36 feet from the apex of home plate; this line should be marked with chalk.

66.3 There should be three (3) baseline markings on the infield: one halfway between 1st and 2nd base, one halfway between 2nd and 3rd base and a third line halfway between 3rd base and Home base. When the umpire rules the ball to be dead, the runner is awarded the next base if the runner has at least one foot past the baseline marker.

67. All players must be in the batting lineup.

68. If there are at least ten (10) players on the lineup, the coach must use four (4) outfielders. This cannot be changed, barring injury, during the game. If four (4) outfielders are used, they must be played in the normal positions (no rover).

69. An inning will end with three (3) outs, 7 runs in an inning or if the at-bat team bats through their order; whichever of these conditions is met first. The only exception is the final inning where a team can score unlimited runs, so the only condition that ends a half inning is three (3) outs.

70. The catcher will be in full catcher's gear. They may elect to use a standard glove as opposed to a catcher's mitt. They may assume the normal catching position but are not required to do so.

71. All pitching will be done by coaches; no players are permitted to pitch. Batters will be afforded seven (7) pitches or five (5) swings to hit the ball; there is a ten (10) pitch max for an at-bat (this includes foul balls). The batter cannot be struck-out by a foul ball unless it is the tenth pitch of the at-bat; if the foul ball is caught by a defensive player then the batter is out.

71.1 The coach may choose to throw the last two (2) of the seven (7) count as a soft-toss. It is recommended that this only be used for players who struggle to master hitting from the coach pitch and in lieu of a batting tee.

71.2 At the discretion of the home team, a batting tee may be used for a player. The batting tee cannot be brought into play until at least five (5) pitches have been attempted. The player will have as many swings at the tee as there are pitches left from the original seven (7) count. It is recommended that the batting tee only be used for players who struggle to master hitting from the coach pitch.

72. The player who is playing the position of Pitcher must keep at least one (1) foot in the dirt circle of the pitcher's mound. The player should be behind and to

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the side of the coach pitcher, but not directly behind. The player may stand on the left or right side of the mound and may switch from batter to batter.

73. There is no INFIELD FLY RULE for 8U.
74. When a throw comes in from the outfield and is back to the player at the pitcher position with one foot in the pitcher's circle, it is a dead ball. If an infielder attempts to make a play, it is a live ball; if the pitcher does not have at least one foot within the pitcher's circle, it is a live ball. The ball must be controlled by the player at the pitcher position and that player **MUST** have at least one foot in the pitcher's circle to be a dead ball situation.
75. There will be no bunting.
76. There will be no stealing of bases.
77. Games will be no more than six (6) innings. No new innings may start after one (1) hours and thirty (30) minutes.
78. In 8U, the scoreboard shall be used for normal game tracking purposes; this includes runs scored by the home team, runs scored by the away team, inning count and outs.