

MTLL Rookie Baseball League Rules

(Updated April 2025)

A. GENERAL

- 1.1 Our purpose is to teach the game of baseball and allow our children to have fun. Let's be good teachers and set a good example to the players and fans.
 - 1.1.1 Negative cheering is not allowed at any time by any player, coach or fan. Chanting or cheering directed towards the opposing team is not allowed. Each coach is expected to enforce this rule for his/her team and fans.
 - 1.1.2 Cooperation with the umpire (coaches) is expected at all times. There will be no harassment of the umpire at any time by any player, coach or spectator. Coaches are expected to enforce this rule. If an umpire has misinterpreted a rule, a team head coach or acting head coach should call time-out and speak to the umpire in the presence of the opposing team head coach. The umpire reserves the right to reverse his or her decision to reflect the correct rule interpretation. No intimidation of an umpire will be allowed. The umpire will have complete authority of the rules during the game. The umpire will report to the League Director any instances of non-sportsmanlike behavior by a player, coach or spectator and the umpire has authority to eject any violators from a game and/or ballpark. The MTLL Board will further reprimand offenders if determined as necessary.
- 1.2 Coaches are to remove a player from a practice or game if the coach determines that the player exhibits signs, symptoms, or behavior consistent with a concussion or head injury or the coach suspects the player has sustained a concussion or head injury.
- 1.3 A player's league is determined by his/her grade in January of the year in which play is conducted. The Rookie Baseball League is for Kindergarten (K4 & K5) players. All players must be registered and have a completed & signed medical release, MTLL Release of Liability Agreement, and Parent-Athlete Concussion Agreement to be eligible to practice or play in games.
- 1.4 The League Director assigns players to teams. The only exception is that siblings will be assigned to the same team and coaches' children will be assigned to the coaches' team.

B. Sportsmanship

1. The league's top priorities are to develop all players to their fullest potential in their baseball skills, teamwork, and sportsmanship, and to help players have a fun and enjoyable experience with baseball. The development of the players is more important than coaches' egos, parents' desires, winning games, or anything else.

2. No negative cheering is permitted. Examples of negative or opponent-directed cheering include "No hitter, swing batter", and "drop it". It is the coaching staff's responsibility to keep players and fans from breaking this rule.
3. Players should be taught to control their emotions. If a player throws any equipment in anger, or threatens any other participant, that player will be removed from the game by his/her coach.
4. Head coaches or co-coaches will report each occurrence of game or sportsmanship rule violation to the league director.
5. The MTLL Board will reprimand offenders of any game or sportsmanship rule in an appropriate manner. Offending coaches may lose the privilege of coaching.
6. The league will not provide umpires. Each coaching staff will designate one person to serve as an umpire. A coach may designate himself or herself. If the designees disagree over a call, then the play will be replayed.

C. Game Information/Rules

1. All games will be played at Steffen or Range Line fields. All games start at 6 p.m. and **will be limited to 90 minutes.**
2. There will be no pitching in Rookie baseball. Instead, official pitching machines and balls will be used. If a batter is unable to make contact after **4 or 5** pitches/swings, a batting tee will be used. There will be no strikeouts. Batters will be permitted to hit off the tee until they hit a fair ball or a fly ball that is caught.
3. Coaches will exchange lineups at least five minutes before the start of the game. Players shall bat in the order they are listed on the official lineup. A sequential batting order will be used so that all players participate.
4. Courtesy runners are allowed for reasons of injury. The last player to be called out for the offensive team will be the courtesy runner.
5. Stealing is not allowed. Base runners must stay in contact with the base until the pitched ball crosses home plate. Any runner is out when the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag. (i.e., no "barreling into the fielder.")
6. Each team will bat their entire order every inning. The last batter in the lineup will hit a "home run" and clear the bases. The other team will then bat. Typically, a game will consist of at least three complete innings. No official score will be kept.
7. Players on the batting team who are not up to bat, and players on the defensive team who are sitting out, must be in the dugout or behind the dugout.
8. If a batted ball hits any part of the pitching machine or battery, the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base, and any runners advance one base. If a thrown ball hits the machine, the ball is dead, and all runners advance one base.
9. The defensive team will consist of 10 players, including 5 outfielders, 4 infielders, and 1 player positioned 6 feet behind either side of the pitching machine. The "catcher" must be an adult, who will stand behind the screen when balls are pitched. The "catcher's" duties will include retrieving pitched balls missed or fouled off by batters and placing balls on the tee. Adult "catchers" may make plays at home on runners; players from the defensive team may also cover home when appropriate.
10. There is free substitution of defensive players. No player may play more than one inning at the same position per game. A defensive player may only sit out one inning per game. The exception to this rule is if a player is injured.
11. Bunting is not allowed. There will be no infield-fly rule.

12. Out-of-play boundaries will be defined and explained to players prior to each game.
13. All batters and runners must wear "officially approved" batting helmets at all times.
14. Throwing the bat after hitting is not allowed. A player will get one warning, after that, the batter will be called out.
15. Players must keep their shirttails tucked in at all times.
16. In the event of bad weather, the coaches will have discretion to call off games. The Lightning and Thunder Suspension Rule Set forth below shall apply. Rainouts typically will not be made up.
17. LIGHTNING AND THUNDER SUSPENSION RULE:
Criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
 - Thirty minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
 - Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30 minute count, reset the clock and another 30 minute count should begin.