



## 2026 American Divisional Rules

---

- **Game Guidelines:**

- Weekdays the time limit is sunset.
- Weekends there is a time limit.
  - Either sunset
  - NO new inning after 1 hour 45 minutes.
- There will be a 10-run Mercy Rule in effect after the 4th inning.
- There is a 5-run Cap every inning regardless of score.
- Every player must record at least 1 at-bat and play 6 consecutive outs in the field if present for the first pitch.
- Subs can be rotated at any time.
- A Continuous Batting Order will be used throughout the game.
- If a bat is thrown while batting, the Umpire can call the player out!
- No time-outs in the last inning unless the pitcher has reached his/her max pitches or an injury has occurred.

- **Pitching Guidelines:**

- Any player may pitch (Exception: 10 and above cannot)
- Number of pitches a pitcher can throw shall be followed by the Little League Rulebook guidelines.
  - 6-8 years old = 50 pitches per day maximum.
  - 9 years old = 75 pitches per day maximum.
  - NO 10/11/12 YEAR OLD MAY PITCH.
- Days of rest shall be followed by the Little League Rulebook guidelines.
  - Player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest is required.
  - Player pitches 21-35 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.
  - Player pitches 36-50 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.
  - Player pitches 51-65 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
  - Player pitches 66 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- A pitcher once removed from the mound cannot return as a pitcher.
- A pitcher who delivers 40 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of the game.
  - The only exception is if the pitcher reaches 40 pitches while facing a batter he can finish that batter only (finish the batter threshold).
- No catcher that has caught more than three innings can become a pitcher.
- Balk rules shall not apply.
- No intentional walks - pitchers must pitch all 4 balls.

- **Base Running Guidelines:**

- Home Plate is CLOSED.

- No runner shall advance home unless he/she is forced home on a walk, a batted ball, or awarded home by the Umpire.
      - Runners shall not advance from 3rd to home on passed balls, wild pitches, or overthrows by the catcher.
      - Even a 1st and 3rd situation where the defending team chooses to attempt to throw out a runner at 2nd still does not give the green light to steal home.
        - A runner stealing 3rd and there is an overthrow may **not** continue on to home.
          - You must earn every run either by walking with bases loaded or by hitting the ball in play.
      - **NO STEALING HOME FOR ANY REASON.**
    - A player can still get picked off at 3rd if leading off after the pitch .
    - If awarded a walk to first, the player must stop at first.
      - Player cannot steal 2nd.
    - No runner shall advance more than one base on a walk.
    - Stealing 2nd or 3rd is legal as long as the runner does not leave until the ball reaches the batter.
      - A runner can only steal one base at a time.
    - A batter is automatically OUT on a dropped or missed 3rd strike by the catcher.
    - No Infield Fly Rule.
    - A courtesy runner can be used in the event a player is injured while reaching base or hit by pitch.
      - The player who was the last recorded out will run in place of the injured player.
      - A courtesy runner can also be used when the catcher and/or pitcher is on base and there are two outs.
        - A courtesy runner must be reported to the plate Umpire.
- **LL Rule Updates & Additions to RCLL Bylaws**
  - Alterations or Modifications made to the Bat: Clarifies that products, such as, but not limited to, choke-knobs and choke-up assists are considered alterations to the bat and are not permitted.
    - **2026 - Thumb protectors are now permitted.**
  - Neoprene Sleeves: Permits neoprene sleeves to be worn without being covered by an undershirt, provided the neoprene sleeve is a solid color and not white or gray.
  - Helmet Stickers: Permits the use of helmet stickers or decals, provided that such usage is not excessive, is not offensive, and does not make inappropriate references, such as that to drugs or alcohol.
    - **2026 - Removed "neoprene" sleeve distinction to now include all sleeves.**
  - Jewelry is permitted as long as it is not excessive or interfering with the batter's eye. This will be determined by the umpire or opposing manager/coach.
    - If players are asked to remove their jewelry, they must do so.
      - Players/Managers failing to do so will result in disciplinary action.
  - All Rancho Cordova Little League Umpires are required to check equipment (i.e. bats, catchers gear, helmets, etc) prior to the start of the game.
  - If an illegal bat (or other) is found after the game starts, a penalty will be enforced according to Little League Rule 3.01.

- There will be no use of Electronic Devices used as a one-way communication from the team to the catcher while the team is on defense.
- **Reminder (Updated 2023 - Rule 3.09)**
  - Managers or coaches are permitted to warm up a pitcher at home plate or in the bullpen or elsewhere at any time including in-game warm-up, pre-game warm-up, and in other instances.
    - Does not apply in Tournament Play.
- **Suspended Game**
  - Suspended games will start where they left off; runners on base, outs, score, etc.
  - The player who was pitching may re-enter the game as pitcher as long as the player is eligible to pitch (not on rest days from prior game and not over pitch count from suspended game).
  - Pitcher's pitch count re-starts at the suspended game.
  - Any pitchers who pitched in the suspended game, may not re-enter the game as pitcher unless they were the last pitcher of record.
- **Managers/Coaches in Dugout**
  - 4 approved Coaching Staff are allowed in the Dugout.
    - Parents, siblings, etc. are not allowed to enter.
  - If a coach needs to leave during the game, a substitute adult MAY NOT enter the game to take over.
  - Permission needs to be granted by Umpire for adults or players to leave the dugout for any reason.
- **Parent/Guardian/Spectator Communication During Games**
  - Players are NOT permitted to talk with anyone outside of the dugout during games.
    - Only exception to this rule is a player injury when a Board Member will escort the parent to the player.
- **End-of-Season Tournament:**
  - A tournament will be played during the last week of the regular season.
    - More details to follow.
  - 1st and 2nd place trophies, provided by RCLL, will be awarded to the top 2 teams of the American Division Tournament.

**THESE GUIDELINES SUPERCEDE THE 2026 LITTLE LEAGUE RULE BOOK, HOWEVER, ALL OTHER RULES LISTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF LITTLE LEAGUE WILL BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.**