

Little Sluggers' Division Guidelines & Rules

Ages: 4 to 7 year olds

Lil' Sluggers ball has two purposes:

- To get youngsters from 4 and 7 years old interested in the game of baseball.
- To begin preparing them for Rookie level baseball.

Or

To give a positive experience for both children and parents in a sport that has a short playing season in this part of the country. This is accomplished by promoting active participation during the game and providing the players with the necessary fundamentals during games and practices. Coaches should focus on:

- Throwing mechanics.
- Fielding ground balls.
- Catching.
- Hitting techniques.
- Base running.
- Throwing to the correct base depending on the situation. (Perhaps not at this level?)

Object: to teach throwing, hitting, catching and basic base running fundamentals.

Roster:

6 – 9 players per team makes the innings go by quicker, therefore less time for kids to get bored. It is recommend to have unlimited coaching assistants both on and off the playing field to help give children direction.

Set Up:

Each coach is provided with an equipment bag that has bats, helmets, balls, rubber bases and Hitting “T”

Equipment:

All players should have a glove.

6- 9” Rawlings Soft Stitch Baseballs will be supplied at this level and is part of the coach’s equipment bag that is provided at the start of the year.

Cleats are optional, however no metal cleats.

Bases:

“Roughly” 40ft to 45ft between bases, and doesn’t have to be accurate, just so long as the concept is established of running from home plate to 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and back home.

Start Time:

Games begin roughly at 6:00 p.m., or at coaches’ mutual discretion.

It can also be beneficial if each team has 10 to 15 minutes to have a pre-game practice, each taking a turn in “the field”.

Games can last roughly 1.5hrs, or after each team has 2 turns at bat (2 complete innings).

Pitching (Coach Pitch or Hitting Tee):

Coach pitch is a under hand soft toss, from a distance anywhere between 10ft to 15ft away from the batter, depending on the ability of the hitter and the accuracy of the coach. It is recommended

going on one knee so that the batter has an easier line of sight on the ball. There should be little arc in the trajectory of the ball and the height of the pitch is in the batter's power zone (knee to waist).

A parent or coach of hitting team should pitch to their own players, while the opposing team plays in the field.

It is up to the coach's discretion to decide if the child is able to hit a coach pitch/toss, or to hit off a batting tee, "T-Ball".

Catching:

An assistant coach or parent is required for this position.

No back catcher equipment is supplied at this level, therefore for safety reasons children should not be behind the plate.

Hitting:

Helmets are mandatory. If they are holding a bat, they should have a helmet on.

The batter and on-deck batter must wear helmet, with chin strap.

Assistant coaches or parent helpers are recommended to help the players remember the batting line up and to ensure anyone outside the players' bench, or "dug-out", has to have a helmet on. Only two or three batters should be outside the players' bench if their turn to bat is coming up (batter, on deck batter and batter "in the hole").

Each batter shall receive 5 hittable pitches in an attempt to hit a fair ball.

If the child is unable to hit the ball after 5 coach pitches, then the batter is required to hit the ball off a batting tee to get the game moving.

There are no walks or strike outs.

Bunting is not allowed.

After hitting the ball, reinforce to the batter to remember not to throw the bat.

Everyone hits, there are no outs and the inning is over when the last batter hits the ball and proceeds to run out all the bases back to home plate, preceded by base runners already on the bases.

Safety helmets must be worn when at bat and when running the bases.

Running:

After the player hits the ball, he or she shall run to first base only.

The base runner is to stay on the base and only advance one base after batter has hit the ball, and stay there until the next batter hits.

No leading off, stealing bases or taking extra bases. We want to teach the children basic base running, and not to confuse them and coaches at this level any further.

Fielding:

Having maximum 6 – 7 infielders is recommended, which leaves enough room for infielders to each have a chance to play a ball that is hit to them. All additional players move to the outfield to "cover" any ball that gets through the infield.

Children should be taught to throw to 1st base and understand the concept before throwing to any other base.

Have the fielder throw to the base even if the base runner has safely made it already.

Players should be encouraged to play different positions each inning, from one game to the next. This helps to get the idea of distances needed to throw to first base and to familiarize the different perspectives each position has.

Positional players (infielders) should be taught not to obstruct a base runner from running the base path or taking the base (i.e. blocking).

Try to share the positions as much as possible, and encourage reluctant players to attempt different positions.

Watch for position “hogs” who only want to play the exciting positions, and remind them not to be ball hogs either. Reinforce to the players that the ball is to be fielded by the player it is hit to, or in circumstances where players are close together, try to share who takes gets the ball and then give the other player a chance on the next ball hit in their direction.

Inning:

An inning is over when all the players on both teams have batted once.

Length of Game:

Each team can get at least two innings, and is dependent on coaches if they want to play longer than the 1 to 1.5 hours it would normally take.

Score Keeping:

How many smiles vs. how many frowns will decide if the kids are enjoying the sport?

End of Game:

When it’s decided by coaches on both teams that the game is over, teams shall give each other 3 cheers for opposing team followed by handshakes.

Post-game milk shakes are left up to coaches and the parents.