

RANCHO BERNARDO LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL, INC.

## AA (ROOKIES DIVISION)



### *OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS*

*Revised October 2025*

\*\*\*This document is provided for guidance where the Little League Operating Manual and the Official Regulations and Playing Rules of Little League Baseball provide latitude to individual Leagues.\*\*\*

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The following operational guidelines (“Ops”) are intended for implementation at the AA division level in Rancho Bernardo Little League.

## 1. **Ground Rules**

- 1.1. The chalked-off area behind the backstop is an extension of the dugout for coaches only. This is a dead ball area. Coaches are responsible for the actions of the players during baseball practice and/or game time and while the players are still at the field, between the fences.
- 1.2. The outfield fences shall be set at 140 feet from home plate at the left- and right-field lines and 160 feet in center field. A batted ball that bounces over the fence a ground-rule double; all runners may advance only two (2) bases from their originally occupied base. If the ball clears the fence in the air it is a home run.
- 1.3. There shall be an imaginary line from the end of the fence of the first-base and third-base lines as an indefinite extension of the existing fencing. The area outside of these lines is considered a dead ball area.
- 1.4. A ball that is hit and ruled as fair as it passes either first (1st) or third (3rd) base that then rolls past the outfield fence in foul territory is considered a ground-rule double.
- 1.5. On any field without a fence the Home team shall set up a cone line at a distance of approximately 170 ft. from home plate. A batted ball rolling past the cones shall be considered a ground-rule double; a batted ball hit over the cones on the fly shall be considered a home run.

## 2. **Team Selection**

- 2.1. The AA Division draft shall take place after tryouts on a date determined by the Board of Directors.
- 2.2. Only the Player Agent(s), League President, AA Division Director, Selected Board Members, and AA Managers shall be permitted in the draft room. If a team has co-Managers only one (1) Manager shall be allowed to be present in the draft room. If a manager is unavailable he shall appoint another approved league member (an approved list of coaches shall be provided) to take his draft position; alternatively, the AA Division Director shall draft for that team.
- 2.3. A Manager’s meeting shall precede the draft session. The Division Director shall run the meeting.
  - 2.3.1. Open discussion will be encouraged throughout the draft. Balance of teams is important and the President, Division Director, Player Agent, other present board members as well as other Managers, are encouraged to look for imbalances or needs a team may have and provide helpful input.
- 2.4. At the draft, the Player Agent shall post all eligible player names, which include the following league ages:
  - 2.4.1. All 9-year olds that are not drafted into AAA or Farm. 9-year-olds playing in AA require Board approval.
  - 2.4.2. All 8-year-olds, and 7-year-olds that are not drafted into AAA or Farm;
  - 2.4.3. All 6-year-olds who requested AA and have been approved by the Board of Directors.
  - 2.4.4. 5-year-olds are only allowed if requested by parents and approved by the Division Director and Player Agent.
  - 2.4.5. If an eligible player did not attend the tryouts for any reason they will not be placed on the draft board (the exception being a child of an approved coach, see rule 2.8). Before the team draft order is selected the Player Agent will clearly identify the kids who did not attend tryouts. During this time period before the draft order is known RBLL encourages all managers, the division director, and the

player agent to discuss what is known about the kids who did not attend the tryouts. Exceptions are encouraged for kids who might be known to be a high draft pick. Ultimately the authority to place a kid who missed tryouts back on the draft board will be left to the play agent, division director, president, and vice president. Once these discussions and decisions are finished, then team draft order can be determined. After the draft is finished, the player agent, division director, President, and Vice President will place the remaining kids absent from the tryouts on teams based on best knowledge of the players skill in order to ensure teams are even. If any of the 4 members listed above have a conflict of interest, e.g. the President is coaching AA, then a board member will replace them.

2.4.5.1. Important items to be aware of: (1) The last teams in the draft order will be the most likely to have the kids absent from the tryouts placed on their teams (e.g., if there are 5 teams, 55 kids, and 2 of the kids did not attend tryouts then the last 2 picks in the draft will be filled by these kids through rule 2.4.4. ) (2) The goal of this rule is to ensure the fairest teams possible. A kid who is absent from tryouts but is known to be a talented player should not be placed on a team through rule 2.4.4. This would in essence be gifting a team as their last pick what should have been a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> round pick. Rather the kid should be clearly identified as a talented player and placed back on the draft board for all coaches to have an opportunity to select for their team.

- 2.5. The names of all eligible players shall be posted by player number. Player numbers are to be assigned by the Player Agent prior to tryouts and shall be determined alphabetically by age (i.e. the number 600 shall correspond to the first alphabetically-listed, 6-year-old player last name). Players added to the player pool after initial posting of the player numbers shall be added in sequential ordering.
- 2.6. Sibling Option - siblings shall be annotated on the draft board. Siblings playing in the same division must play on the same team.
- 2.7. The Manager's child shall be drafted in the 3rd round.
- 2.8. Prior to player selection, AA Managers may select one Coach, to be approved by the President, Division Director, and Player Agent. The Coach's child(ren) shall be drafted in the round(s) immediately following the Manager's child(ren).
- 2.9. The Draft shall be conducted in accordance with the Operating Manual using the "METHOD IN FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION – PLAN A"
- 2.10. Wild Card(s) may be assigned by the Player Agent to balance out the number of players per team.
  - 2.10.1. The Player Agent shall decide on a method, to be kept confidential between himself/herself and the League President, of determining who shall receive the next Wild Card; and
  - 2.10.2. Teams with the greatest deficit of players shall be assigned a Wild Card first.
- 2.11. Managers should sit opposite of the draft board in order of their pick. The draft pick order shall be decided upon prior to beginning the draft under the supervision of the Division Director.
- 2.12. Team name selections shall occur in the reverse of the draft order.
- 2.13. After completion of the draft, managers will have the opportunity to trade players before leaving the draft room. **Once managers leave the draft room, NO MORE TRADES ARE ALLOWED.**

#### **Fall Ball Only**

- 2.14. The teams shall be assembled by committee lead by the fall ball director in coordination with the Player Agent.

- 2.15. Use blind draft IAW Little League Rulebook Plan C (Blind Draft Method) as a guide for team formation. Directions can be found in the Policies section of the Little League rule book under Local League Draft Methods. Draft is by age (all 6-year-olds are evenly allocated, followed by all 5-year-olds and then all 4-year-olds). Efforts shall be made to balance teams by age and any other known information (experience or skill) while trying to accommodate requests in the fall (as long as the intent of the request isn't to build a strong team).
- 2.16. Manager's children and specific coach/parent preferences are placed first within the appropriate age group, reducing the number of blind picks for that team by the number of placements.

### **3. Playing Rules**

#### **3.1. General Guidelines**

- 3.1.1. An Exhibition Period shall be implemented at the start of the season at the discretion of, and lasting a number of games as determined by, the Division Director based on number of teams and scheduled number of games.
- 3.1.2. The home team shall occupy the first-base dugout, prepare the field of play including a chalk line halfway between bases (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base, and 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home), putting out bases, setting up the cone line (if no fence), drag and water down the infield (if possible), and setting up the pitching machine and testing it no later than 45 minutes before the start of the game. The visiting team is responsible for putting away all bases, the pitching machine, and any equipment at the end of the game.
- 3.1.3. The home team is the official scorer and shall communicate the final score to the Division Director for standings. Managers are encouraged to communicate the score between themselves at the end of each half inning to ensure there are no disagreements. Note that no score will be kept during the Exhibition Period.
- 3.1.4. There is no minimum required number of players to begin a game.
- 3.1.5. There are ten (10) defensive positions, which must include four (4) outfielders. The outfielders must be positioned far enough into the grassy part of the field as to not interfere or be confused with the infielders. Field 8 only, where the grass is further from home plate, shall have the outfielders positioned sufficiently far enough beyond the baseline so as to be consistent with playing in the grass at Field 2.
- 3.1.6. Teams may borrow players from the other team to field all ten (10) defensive positions. The borrowed defensive player(s) shall be the last player(s) in the opposing team's batting line-up to start the game and shall be last out(s) during the opposing team's prior at bat. Players from teams other than the two (2) teams on the field shall not be eligible for pool play.
- 3.1.7. If a batted ball hits the pitching machine, or the ball bucket, or hits the pitching machine operator, without first being touched by a defensive player, the ball is dead, the batter is awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base, and all runners advance one (1) base from their originally-occupied base.
- 3.1.8. Run Rules:

- 3.1.8.1. Only four (4) runs per inning are allowed per team. This rule does not apply to the sixth (6th) inning, which has no run limit. *Note: if a team has more than four (4) runners cross the plate in any given inning, the score for that team in that inning shall be no more than four (4) runs.*
- 3.1.8.2. AA Division will use the 15-10-8 run rule option see Little League Rule 4.00. 15 runs applies after 3 innings (2.5 if the home team is ahead), 10 after 4 innings (3.5 if the home team is ahead), and 8 after 5 innings (4.5 if the home team is ahead). If the visiting team has a lead of fifteen (15), ten (10), or eight (8) runs or more respectively, the home team must bat in its half of the inning.
- 3.1.8.3. The 8 run rule does not apply in the playoffs
- 3.1.9. Each team may have up to five (5) adults on the field of play. They may be in the following positions only: dugout (required at all times players are present in the dugout), up to two (2) base coaches, pitching machine operator, and up to two (2) in the outfield.
- 3.1.10. Adults must stay in foul territory during the End-of-Season Tournament.
- 3.1.11. Game time limits are as follows:
  - 3.1.11.1. The official Game Start Time shall be the time when the pitch is delivered; the Game Start Time may occasionally not coincide with the scheduled game start.
  - 3.1.11.2. No new inning may start after one hour and forty-five minutes (1:45) from the Game Start Time. A new inning begins when the last out of the prior inning is made.
  - 3.1.11.3. The game shall end no later than 30 minutes prior to the next game start time. The score shall revert back to the score and the end of the prior full inning of play.
  - 3.1.11.4. Darkness - if, in the judgement of the Managers, a safety concern arises out of lack of sunlight, the game shall be stopped immediately and the score shall revert back to the score at the end of the prior full inning of play.
- 3.1.12. The infield-fly rule shall not apply.

## 3.2. Pitching

- 3.2.1. A pitching machine shall be used in this division with the following rules:
  - 3.2.1.1. For player safety, only a Manager, coach, or adult umpire may operate the pitching machine at all times. No player is ever allowed to operate the pitching machine.
  - 3.2.1.2. Pitching machines shall not be used for batting practice prior to the start of a game.
  - 3.2.1.3. The pitching machine must be setup and tested 45 minutes prior to the scheduled game time. (This should be one of the first actions taken by the Home team when they arrive at the field.)
  - 3.2.1.4. If the pitching machine is not working during setup or malfunctions during the game, a Manager or coach from the batting team shall perform live-arm pitching. No more than five (5) minutes shall be spent diagnosing and/or fixing the pitching machine. Game time shall not be extended due to pitching machine malfunction.
  - 3.2.1.5. The pitching machine shall be set to 36 mph for the first half of the season and 40 mph for the second half of the season. RBLL uses the Blue or Black Flame machines. The Division Director shall discuss with the Managers the appropriate machine settings for the season.
  - 3.2.1.6. Balls returned from the catcher to the pitching machine operator are not in play. Runners may not advance.
  - 3.2.1.7. The pitching machine shall be located as follows:
    - 3.2.1.7.1. Field 2 - centered over or just behind the pitching rubber, when installed. If no pitching rubber is present, located approximately 45 ft. from home plate.
    - 3.2.1.7.2. Field 8 - located approximately 45 ft. from home plate.

- 3.2.1.7.3. Field 3 - behind the pitcher's mound on the flat surface. Speed to be adjusted and agreed upon by the Managers due to extra distance.
- 3.2.1.7.4. Majors Field - behind the pitcher's mound with the front pegs in the dirt and the rear leg in the grass. Speed to be adjusted and agreed upon by the Managers due to extra distance.

3.2.2. Per batter pitch limit

- 3.2.2.1. The batter shall receive a maximum of five (5) hittable pitches.
- 3.2.2.2. If the 5th and subsequent pitches are fouled off, the at-bat may continue until the batter either places the ball in play, swings and misses the ball, or watches a hittable pitch pass by. If a pitch is considered to be unhittable by the hitting team, the Manager of the hitting team shall shout "UNHITTABLE PITCH" immediately after the delivery of what he/she considers to be an unhittable pitch and before the delivery of the next pitch. If the defensive team Manager disagrees, he/she may contest. If the batter swings at an unhittable pitch, he/she has deemed the pitch to be hittable and therefore an unhittable pitch shall not be considered.

*Note: in the End-of-Season Tournament, the Umpire shall resolve disagreements.*

- 3.2.3. All five (5) balls shall be pitched before returning the balls to the pitching machine operator.

3.3. Base running

- 3.3.1. The "Safety Base" option will be used per guidelines set forth in the Green Book.

- 3.3.2. Players may only advance on a fairly hit ball. Steals are not allowed.

*Exception: a fly ball hit in foul territory and caught by a fielder would result in a live ball and runners may advance at their own risk.*

3.3.3. Infield plays:

- 3.3.3.1. An Infield Play shall be defined as when a batted baseball does not travel into the grass (when playing at Field 2 or the Majors field) or a distance consistent with the Field 2 grass distance (when playing at Field 8). If a batted ball hits a base or an infielder's body/glove and remains a fair ball and travels into the outfield grass, the ball is no longer considered in the in-field.

- 3.3.4. When a batter hits a ball to the outfield, runner(s) may advance until the ball is returned to the infield and in the possession of an infielder.

- 3.3.4.1. Once the ball is in possession of an infielder, base runners in-between bases may continue to advance at their own risk. If after obtaining possession of the ball, the infielder throws the ball to a base in an attempt to get a baserunner out, then the overthrow rule applies (see 3.3.6).

- 3.3.4.2. If the infielder attempts to tag or get a force out the ball is still considered in-play and base-runners not involved in the play can continue to run at their own risk.

- 3.3.4.3. If the infielder holds onto the ball (or clearly throws to the pitcher), the ball is now dead. Baserunners who were over halfway to their next base when the infielder established possession of the ball are allowed to continue to their next base safely. Baserunners who were under halfway to the next base when the infielder established possession must return to their previous base (remember the ball is dead and no play can be made on them).

3.3.5. Overthrows

- 3.3.5.1. Baserunners may advance on overthrows from the start of the season
- 3.3.5.2. Baserunners may only advance one (1) base on an overthrow, at their own risk. A ball thrown from the outfield to the infield and in the possession of an infielder is considered an infield play from the time the ball is in the infielder's possession. Only one (1) overthrow is permitted per ball in play.

*Example: a ball overthrown at first base may allow the batter-runner to run to second base at their own risk, but no further than second base. If the first-baseman picks up the ball and overthrows second base in an attempt to get the batter-runner out, the batter-runner must still remain at 2nd base. All other runners may advance only one (1) base in the event of an overthrow.*

- 3.3.6. If, after receiving the ball from the outfield, an infielder attempts to make a throw to try to get a runner out, all runners may continue to advance to the next base, and the next base only, at the runner's own risk. Overthrows shall still be applicable (see above).

*Note: This is put in place to keep game play and base running from getting out of control. See example provided above.*

- 3.3.7. All overthrown balls that enter a dead-ball area shall result in all base runners advancing to the next base they were headed to at the time the ball entered the dead ball area.

#### 3.4. Mandatory Play

- 3.4.1. Every player shall play the outfield at least one (1) inning every game.
- 3.4.2. All players shall play a minimum of two (2) defensive innings in an infield position to be completed within the first five (5) innings of the game. Infield positions shall be: P, C\*, 1B, 2B, 3B, and SS. \*The catcher position can only be counted towards one inning of infield play even if played multiple innings.
- 3.4.3. No player shall sit two (2) innings on the bench until all players have sat at least one (1) inning on the bench. Additionally, no player shall sit three (3) innings on the bench until all players have sat at least two (2) innings on the bench.

#### 3.5. Fielding

- 3.5.1. Outfielders are not permitted to tag out runners or make force-outs at the bases, nor can they run the ball into the infield to stop the runners from advancing.

*Note: an infielder must be in possession of the baseball for the ball to be considered in the infield for baserunning purposes.*

- 3.5.2. If a thrown ball touches a coach on the field, it is a dead ball and all base runners shall be awarded the next base they were headed to at the time of contact. A ball thrown intentionally to the pitching machine operator, either by an infielder or an outfielder, shall be considered a dead ball. The pitching

machine operator shall make an honest effort to catch said ball and not avoid catching it in an effort to move the baserunners forward.

3.5.3. Outfielders shall play far enough back as to not be confused with infielders in left field, left-center field, right-center field, and right field. There are to be no rovers, or “5-man” allowed.

#### 4. **End-of-Season Tournament - Playoffs**

4.1. These Ops shall be enforced during all Playoff games.

4.2. All teams shall be seeded for the Playoffs by their regular-season standings, as tracked by the Division Director.

4.2.1. The Division Director shall keep running standings of the AA teams during the regular season and provide weekly updates to the AA Managers.

4.3. The tournament shall be double-elimination and begin on the next available date after the end of the regular season.

##### 4.4. Tiebreakers

4.4.1. In the event of a tie between two (2) teams, the following steps shall be used to decide the higher seed:

- 4.4.1.1. Head to head;
- 4.4.1.2. Total runs scored in games played against each other;
- 4.4.1.3. Total runs scored in games played against other teams; then
- 4.4.1.4. A coin toss by the Division Director.

4.4.2. In the event of a tie between three (3) or more teams, the following steps shall be used to decide the seeding order:

- 4.4.2.1. Head-to-Head record
- 4.4.2.2. Total runs scored for the season (higher value is higher seed);
- 4.4.2.3. Total runs against for the season (lower value is higher seed); then
- 4.4.2.4. A coin toss by the Division Director completed with the League President.

4.4.3. All scoring to determine tie breakers shall be from the regular season only. Games during the Exhibition Period shall not be included in standings.

4.5. For each game, the home team shall be determined by the highest seed in the winners bracket and a coin toss in the elimination bracket. The coin toss shall take place prior to the start of the game with both Managers present.

4.6. The Managers shall exchange written lineups, including full defensive positions, prior to the beginning of Playoff games.

*Note: this is intended to allow visibility into playing time minimums, as required by these Ops. The Umpire shall assist in resolving any disagreements between Managers.*

##### 4.7. Umpires

4.7.1. Umpires: at least one (1) adult Umpire (the “Umpire”) shall be provided by the League for each playoff game. Up to two (2) additional, minor-aged umpires may be provided at the discretion of the

Umpire. Umpires will be approved by the Division Director and/or the Board prior to the beginning of the Playoffs.

- 4.7.2. Pre-game meeting: the Umpire and both team Managers shall meet before each Playoff game to discuss ground-rules, rule interpretation, and to ensure to as high an extent as possible the game is safe and competitive. The following topics are highly recommended to be discussed:
  - 4.7.2.1. Baserunning advancements;
  - 4.7.2.2. Infield player possession of ball thrown to the infield from the outfield;
  - 4.7.2.3. Hittable vs. unhittable pitches;
  - 4.7.2.4. Exchange of score after each ½ inning; and
  - 4.7.2.5. Parent behavior.
- 4.7.3. Equipment inspection: the Umpire shall conduct an inspection of the equipment prior to and during the Playoff games. If the Umpire finds equipment that does not meet the requirements of the Ops or Little League Baseball, he/she has the authority to require that equipment be removed from the field immediately. This includes baseball bats marked for tee ball only.

## 5. The Classics Game(s)

- 5.1. Following the conclusion of the Playoffs, the Board has the option to hold the AA Classic Game(s) consisting of selected players from the AA division. The Board shall determine the number of games.
- 5.2. The two championship game managers from the Playoffs shall be the managers for the AA Classics Game, if they wish to do so, which shall consist of the individual players that embody the spirit of Little League Baseball throughout the course of the season, as determined and nominated, by their individual team managers.
- 5.3. The AA managers shall select players for the AA Classics Game(s). The Division Director shall determine the number of players that will play on each Classics Game team. Teams shall be equally represented. If the number of teams and players doesn't work out to be even, higher seeded teams from the end-of-season tournament results will have an extra player. The Division Director shall decide upon any issues or discrepancies about the number of Classics players selected.