

East Lincoln Optimist Rules – Babe Ruth League

Game Start Times: Teams have 15 minutes from the published game start time to field a complete team. The fifteen minutes will not be added to the allotted game time and the official clock will not be changed.

Game Length & Time Limits: Games are 7 innings; A regulation game is 3.5 innings if the home team is leading or 4 innings if tied or the home team is behind. No new inning starts after 1 hour, 50 minutes. A new inning starts when the third out is recorded. Any inning started prior to the “no new inning” rule will be played in its entirety if necessary and conditions permit. The timer should be paused during a weather delay. Playoff Games are still subject to the “No New Inning after 1 hour, 50 minutes hours rule,” except in the case of a tie. The Championship Game will have no time limit and play a full seven innings.

Between Inning Length: To help speed up play, there will be a maximum of 60 seconds between innings. If the defensive team is stalling the umpire can start calling “balls” on the batter with 20-second intervals. If the offensive team is stalling the umpire can start calling “strikes” with 20-second intervals. With the exception of the first inning (5 warm up pitches) It’s recommended the catchers will have a courtesy runner to allow them to get dressed and ready to warm up the pitcher. The courtesy runner is the last batted out.

Number of Players: A complete team is considered 8 or more players. Teams not fielding 8 players will forfeit the game. In the event a team plays with 8 players the 9th position in the lineup will be an automatic out throughout the game. The 9th empty position out is mandatory for the entire season.

Mercy Rules: 15 Runs after 4 innings 10 Runs after 5 innings 8 Runs after 6 innings, it’s an official game after the mercy rule is applied.

Tied Games: If the game remains tied after the completion of 7 innings or after the 1 hour, 50 minutes “no new inning” rule, the game moves into an International Tie Breaker (ITB). The visiting team player who was the last batted out of the previous inning, will be placed on 2nd base with “No” outs to begin the inning. At the completion of the visiting team at bat, the home team player who made the last batted out of the previous inning, will be placed on 2nd base with “No” outs to begin the inning. During the regular season, only one inning of ITB will be played, and if the teams are still tied, the game is a final. In the season ending tournament, the ITB will continue until there is a winner. Pitching rules apply for extra innings games.

Batting Lineup: Teams will bat the total number of players on the roster at any given game. For example, if a team has 11 players all 11 players will bat as the Batting lineup from 1 thru 11. Substitutions will be unlimited and not restricted. *(The exception will be for Starting Pitchers).*

Fielding Substitutions: A player is not allowed to “sit out” in consecutive innings. For example, if a player is not in a fielding position during the first inning, they must be inserted into a fielding position in the second inning. (Coaches should try to have all players sit at least once, when possible, in a game)

Courtesy Runners: As outlined in “Between Inning Length” section above, a courtesy runner is recommended for a catcher during the game to help expedite play. The Courtesy runner can be used at any point during an inning (no out limit). The last batted out for the team requesting the courtesy runner is the only player allowed to pinch run in this situation.

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Substitute Players: Substitute players are allowed during the REGULAR season if a team cannot field 8 players. A maximum of 9 players are allowed in the line-up if substitutions are used. Substitutes will only be allowed if original rostered team is down to 7 or 8 players. Substitute players are defined as; any player registered in the current ELOC baseball program, that is in the Babe Ruth league (13-15 age) or the Majors (11-12 age) league, if the coach and parents feel he has the skill set to play up. No more than two (2) substitute players are allowed. Substitute players can ONLY play outfield positions and must be placed at bottom of batting line up. Coaches must notify the opposing coach as soon as possible if using a substitute player.

Players Leaving Early: If a player must leave the game due to injury or illness, during the game, and is not able to bat when their turn comes up, you may skip to the next batter without penalty. The player retains the position in the batting order and may bat enter later in the game if the player recovers. Any coach found manipulating this to gain an advantage when one of the weaker batters is due up, will be suspended 2 games. Any player who vacates the batting order for another reason (i.e. ejection, or non-illness/injury), will incur an out when the player is scheduled to bat.

Players Arriving Late: If a player arrives late to a game after his spot in the lineup has occurred, there is no penalty unless the following situations occur... ◦ if a team has only 8 players at the start of the game, the 9th position would be an automatic out as stated above. Once the player arrives the player may enter the line up in the 9th spot. ◦ if a team has 9 players present to start and the EH is not there for the second at bat, at this point the player would be scratched from the lineup.

(Coaches have the flexibility to discuss and modify the above player participation rules prior to the start of the game. Please make sure umpires are aware of what is agreed upon prior to the first pitch. Whatever is decided prior to play will be official for that game. A losing coach cannot revert to the above rules after agreeing to something different and then does not like the outcome of the game. If coaches cannot come to agreement prior to the first pitch, then the above rules will be fully enforced.)

Equipment:

Cleats: Metal cleats are permitted in all Babe Ruth age divisions

Base running: Runners can headfirst slide with the exception at Home Plate. Runners are only allowed to slide feet first at Home Plate. Runners are required to slide at Home Plate if a play is being made at the plate. Runners are not allowed to leave the ground in attempt to reach a base or Home Plate. These rules are set, and no warnings given.

Bats: The bat may not exceed 34" in length, and the bat barrel may not exceed 2 5/8" in diameter. All aluminum/alloy barrel bats and all composite handle (only) aluminum/alloy barrels are allowed. Only composite barrel bats certified and marked **BBCOR .50** or **USABat** will be allowed. Wood barrel bats conforming to the specifications of Official Baseball Rule 1.10 are allowed.

Pitching Rules: A "hard" pitch count rule has been established for all age groups and will be enforced. Rules impacting all age divisions: Once a pitcher delivers one pitch to a batter, the pitcher is deemed to have pitched in one inning. If a team is challenged on pitch count violation and refuses to make a change. The opposing team can protest the use of that pitcher as use of an ineligible player. Subsequently, if the ELOC League Director of baseball deems a challenge to be legitimate a forfeit will be posted for the offending team.

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Pitch Count / DAYS REST GUIDELINES: The ELOC Baseball League is committed to making sure that we develop our pitchers in a way that will allow them to pitch for as long as they possibly can throughout their baseball careers. Therefore, we will take pitch count rules very seriously and expect coaches and parents to hold each other accountable in this area.

Weekly Limit: A pitcher may not pitch more than 145 pitches during a seven-day period beginning at 12:01AM Monday ending 11:59PM Sunday.

- 24 Hour Rest Rule: If a pitcher pitches pitch 1-65 pitches, he/she is required a 24-hour rest
- 48 Hour Rest Rule: If a pitcher pitches pitch 65-85, he/she is required a 48-hour rest
(time is calculated from start of game)
- Warm up pitches are excluded from the pitch count process.
- The **Starting Pitcher** can return to pitch during the game if: (1)- he/she has not reached set forth game/weekly pitch count, (2)- he/she was removed with 1st mound visit.
- Pitcher must be removed after the 3rd visit or 2nd visit in the same inning.
- Home Team will keep the official pitch count and record the total pitches thrown for all pitchers (home and visitor) who enter the game in this position. It is the responsibility of the coaches to monitor the counts at the end of each inning.

BR 15U: Same Day Limit: A pitcher cannot start another inning once he has thrown 85 pitches. The pitcher can finish the current batter only once they exceeded the pitching limit.

Pitchers: Pitchers are not allowed to wear white sleeves, sunglasses, jewelry or batting gloves while pitching. Balk warnings are given one(1) per team per game thru the first 3 regular season games. No balk warnings given after the first 3 regular season game.

Batters: Bunting is allowed; however, once a batter gets into a bunting position/stance, the batter can either bunt, attempt to bunt, or pull back and take the pitch. The player can NOT pull back out of the bunting stance, lean back and swing away. If the player does pull back and swing away, the batter is automatically out.

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