

East Lincoln Optimist Club – AAA LEAGUE RULES

The official playing rules, with the exceptions and variations contained below shall be “Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth Official Rules” completely revised, as released through the office of the Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth League.

TEAMS

- Age, for the league purposes, means “league age,” which is that age attained by a player as of April 30th of the season in question.
- There are no minimum or maximum players required to start the game. This is a learning age league. However if your team does have less than 9 players you can pull players from the AA league, but that’s not required.

EQUIPMENT / UNIFORM

- A. This league uses modified balls slightly softer than regular baseballs
- B. Rubber soled tennis shoes or rubber cleated shoes are permitted. No metal cleats allowed by players or coaches.
- C. Bats – USSSA Not Allowed. All bats must contain the new USA baseball stamp or sticker. Cal Ripken Baseball Division – All non-wood bats must have USA Bat Marking. Barrel Maximum 2 5/8”. No BBCOR Bats are permitted in the Cal Ripken Division.
- D. Batting helmets are required to be worn by the batter, player in the on-deck circle, and all base runners. The helmets must be NOSCAE approved. Face masks are required in this league.
- E. Catchers are optional and used at the discretion of the coach. If a player is playing in the catcher position they are required to wear proper protective equipment including a helmet with mask.
- F. Players playing the pitcher position are required to wear a facemask.
- G. It is recommended that coaches make every effort to encourage the wearing of athletic supporters or a protective cup by all male players.
- H. Each player must be dressed in full uniform (hat, pants, numbered shirt). Shirts must be tucked into pants with hats facing forward.

THE FIELD

- A. The field dimensions should be set up so that the distance between bases is 60’ and the pitcher’s rubber is 46’ from the back of home plate.

- B. Field Maintenance: After completion of the game, home team is responsible for cleaning up the field consisting of:
 - a. Raking around the infield arc, each base, pitchers' area, and home plate. Pay particular attention to filling in any holes around the infield and batter's box area.
 - b. Both teams are responsible for making sure their dugouts and spectator areas are trash free.
 - c. The last t-ball game of the day needs to put away the thrown down bases
- C. Home team dugout is located on the 1st base line. Visiting team dugout is located on the 3rd base line.
- D. Only the GM or Field Director may rule the field unplayable prior to the start of the game.

SCORING

- A. Each team needs a score keeper.
- B. The home team is the official bookkeeper so in between innings each team must make sure they have the same score.
- C. The home team must provide the T-Ball commissioner the score at the end of the game so it can be updated on the website.

TIME LIMIT

- A. All games will be a maximum of 5 innings or 1 hour and 15 minutes
- B. No new inning shall start 1 hour but current inning may be completed

GAME PLAY

- A. Changing sides during an inning will happen when one of the following occurs:
 - a. Three outs
 - b. 5 runs are scored
- B. If a player gets out they must leave the base.
- C. In case of rain or ten-run rule, the game must last at least 2-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead and 3 innings if the visiting team is ahead to be considered a complete game.
- D. Incomplete games will resume from the point of interruption the next available day.
- E. No extra innings or overtimes in regular season play.

OFFENSE/BATTING

- A. The batting lineup:

- a. Shall consist of all players present for the game.
 - b. The batting lineup should be exchanged by coaches before the game and shouldn't change.
 - c. If a player refuses to bat, leaves the game due to sickness, injury or at parent's request, then that position in the batting order will be skipped without penalty for the remainder of the game.
 - d. Since we are not batting the entire lineup each inning. Once three outs occur or 5 runs are scored we switch sides. Next at bat they will start with the next person in the lineup.
- B. At bats:
- a. Each player will get 5 pitches from either the machine or coach pitch (there will not be any hits off the tee)
 - b. If the hitter does not hit within 5 pitches it is considered a strikeout
 - c. There are no walks, either intentional or unintentional, and a batter does not take first if hit by a pitch.
 - d. If the ball hits the coach, it will be a dead ball and the batter advances to first base. Any other runner will only advance if forced. The coach should try to avoid the ball or getting involved in the play at all costs. Coach should remain still until the play is dead and cannot coach from that spot once the ball is put into play.
 - e. Batter must have both feet in the batter's box. All batters should use normal batting stances with their feet square to the batter's box.
 - f. All batters and base runners must wear batting helmets with face mask.
 - g. A five-foot arc will be placed in front of home plate. The batted ball must be batted past that arc or it's a foul ball.
 - h. Bunting is not allowed
 - i. Infield fly rule will not be enforced.
- C. Stealing/leads: There is no stealing or leads
- D. Overthrows: Runners may not advance on overthrows at any base. We want to encourage throws

PITCHING MACHINE:

- A. The pitching machine will be set at 3, 3, 5 and 35 feet from the back of home plate. (Side note: MARA uses 4,3,6 at 42 feet, we could try this. Chat at coaches meeting)
- B. The operator must stand behind the pitching machine.
- C. The player must stay behind the front of the pitching machine (on either side) until the pitch is released.
- D. A batted ball that hits the pitching machine before touching a fielder will be a dead ball and the batter and any runners will be awarded one base.

STOPPING PLAY:

- A. INFIELD: All runners can advance a maximum of one base on an infield hit.
- B. OUTFIELD: If the batted ball is in the outfield grass, runners may continue to advance until the defensive player throws the ball to an infielder standing on the infield dirt. As

soon as the thrown ball hits the dirt or is touched by an infielder or an outfielder runs the ball into the dirt, the runners are only allowed to advance to the base that they are currently trying to advance to. Time is not called until runners have reached base, returned to previous base or are deemed out.

BASE RUNNING:

- A. Base Runner / Fielder Contact – must try to avoid contact. Coaches have full discretion to make the correct interference and obstruction calls when contact occurs that affects the play.
- B. Head First Sliding – only allowed when returning to a base. Sliding into first base is NOT allowed.
- C. Base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has crossed home plate.
- D. If the runner interferes with a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball, the runner will be ruled out.

DEFENSE / FIELDING

- A. Each player should play all of the defensive innings during the game
- B. All infielders must play actual infield positions. No more than 6 infielders (including catcher, 5 excluding)
- C. Teams which start a game with less than 10 players must have all infield positions filled, remaining players will play outfield.
- D. Outfielders must be in the outfield grass when the play begins. No rover (short fielder) or additional infielders will be allowed. Outfielders may come into the infield to back up a play or cover a base vacated by a long play such as a run-down situation. Outfielders may only cover bases on overthrows and other non-force plays. Outfielders can run the ball in and make an out, but not a force out.
- E. We will strongly encourage players to make a throw to first base. A pitcher may only field a ball and either tag the runner or step on first or third base if it is a natural baseball play (meaning a ball hit down the line). If a ball is fielded in the pitcher's mound area, the pitcher must make a throw.
- F. No rolling the ball to a base.

COACHES

- A. Background Checks: All coaches must be registered on ELOC website and pass a national background check.
- B. General Coaching Information
 - a. Every team shall have 1 Manager/Head Coach and 3 Assistant Coaches and 1 team mom/dad in the dugout. All other parents should be in the designated viewing areas. No parents except for coaches are allowed in the dugout. Any

coach/parent in the dugout MUST have a completed background check and signed the Cal Ripken Code of Conduct.

- b. Defensive coaches should always be stationed behind the outfield players or to the side of 1st/3rd (out of the field of play) and refrain from moving when a ball is ready to be pitched.
 - c. Defensive coaches should never touch or physically guide a defensive player during a live play.
 - d. No coach is permitted to touch a base runner while the ball is in play or the runner will be declared out.
 - e. The team on offense should provide a coach or parent volunteer to stand at the backstop and assist with passed balls to increase the speed of the game.
- C. Coaches & Spectator Conduct
- a. There will be no protests. Under no circumstances should coaches argue with each other (particularly across the field).
 - b. Profanity, fighting, and unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated from anyone.
 - c. Offenders will be asked to leave the park. There shall be no tobacco products used by anyone on the bench or the field during games or practices. PETS are not allowed at any time at ELOC park.
 - d. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the park at any time, anywhere, which includes the parking lots. Offenders will be told to leave the park and proper authorities notified.
 - e. Coaches are responsible for their team's fans (parents, friends, etc.) acting appropriately. Failure to maintain proper behavior may result in ejection of the unruly fan(s) and the coach. In the event, the League Director ejects anyone from the game or field, that individual (Coach, Player, and/or Parent) will serve a one game suspension for the team's next game. If the same individual is ejected twice in the same season, they will no longer be allowed to participate with the team for the remainder of the season.