

# ROOKIE LEAGUE Rules

February 13, 2008

**The primary purpose of the Rookie League** is to introduce the game of baseball to 5 year old boys and girls. Basic skills, hitting, running, fielding and throwing, are taught in a fun and safe environment intended to build self-esteem and confidence. Rules, sportsmanship and teamwork are also emphasized. All players will have an equal opportunity to play infield, outfield and to hit. To help development and keep the game moving the Rookie League uses a batting tee and softer baseball. Little League Baseball, Inc., headquartered in Williamsport, PA, publishes an exhaustive handbook each year titled "Official Regulations and Playing Rules" which East Tonka Little League abides by. ETLL supplements or reinforces these rules with the following local rules:

## General Rules

1. Players, coaches, parents and fans will observe the *ETLL Code of Conduct* at all times.
2. No score will be kept and there is no emphasis on "winning".
3. Each game will consist of six innings (or less if the time limit occurs first).
4. A half-inning consists of 3 outs or batting through the entire order, whichever comes first. (It is rare to get 3 outs.) Throughout the season coaches will rotate the order so that different players get to lead off.
5. Coaches familiar with the rules will act as umpires and make calls. Coaches should decide who will act as umpire before the game starts.
6. Games have a one-hour time limit from the scheduled start time of the game. **Without exception, regardless of the game situation, the game must end five minutes before the scheduled start of the next game.**
7. Teams are responsible for cleaning up the dugout and bleacher areas following each game.
8. The home team will occupy the third base dugout.
9. All batters and base runners must wear a helmet with chinstrap. Catchers must wear a helmet with a face protector and chest protector.

## Fielding

10. All players play in the field each inning with a six-person infield; and the rest in the outfield at least 20' back.
11. A team with fewer than 6 players (a full infield) may borrow fielders from the other team.
12. Players should be rotated to different positions after each inning and be given approximately equal time in the infield and outfield during a game. The coach will attempt to give all players an equal chance to play all positions during the season.
13. An ETLL developmental strategy is to create force situations so fielders can make plays to bases and create outs. To help support good fielding fundamentals the batter and all runners may only advance one base on a hit. Only fielders assigned to an infield position can make a play at a base. Outfielders should throw the ball to the infielders.
14. Two (2) coaches may station themselves in the outfield to assist with verbal instructions before and after each play ...as long as this does not prolong the progress of the game.
15. **All balls are to be hit from the tee. Hitting from the tee promotes development of proper batting technique, regardless of the individual player's ability.**
16. The pitcher may not move off the mound until the ball is hit.

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## Hitting and Running

17. Teams will bat in a continuous order throughout the season (round robin), with all players batting. The starting order for the game should rotate through the entire season so that many players get the opportunity to lead off a game. A batting order and player position spreadsheet form is available at [www.ETLL.org](http://www.ETLL.org) to plan and document batting order and must be used by all coaches.
18. All hitters use a tee, no exceptions, and there are no strikeouts
19. The batter must wait for the ball to be placed on the tee with all players in the field in a ready position before attempting their swing.
20. The bat must contact the ball, (it may hit part of the tee), and the ball must travel at least 6 feet or it is a foul ball. The coaches will draw an arc and determine whether the ball is a hit or a foul; and it is considered fair until a coach calls it foul. A foul ball will be called if the batter steps out of the batter's box before the ball is hit.
21. A foul ball in the air can be caught for an out.
22. There is no bunting, stealing or leading off. The runner may not leave the bag until the ball is hit.
23. Batters should practice running through first base on hits. Player running through 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> may be tagged out.
24. The home plate umpire / coach must remove the tee if there is a run scoring or a potential play at the plate.
25. A batter is out if they throw their bat. There are no warnings for thrown bats; a coach should make that judgment call and explain to the player why they made the call.
26. A player cannot run more than 3 feet off the base line to avoid a tag.
27. A runner may not advance from third to home when bases are not loaded unless they can clearly score without a squeeze play at the plate.