



A – Best Practices & Rules Summary



“The objective of the HLL shall be to implant firmly in the children of the town, the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, respect for authority, baseball skills, and a love for the game so that they may be well adjusted, stronger, and happier citizens and will grow to be good, decent, healthy, and trustworthy citizens with an understanding of and interest in baseball.”

Communication:

- Coaches should send out weekly email to parents to remind them of the week ahead and determine attendance for the week.
- Coaches should have contact information for an adult responsible for each player during all practices and games.

Practice:

- 1 practice/week for 1 hour
- Routine is important: start each practice the same way (e.g., run, stretch, throw), before moving into infield/outfield drills, batting, baserunning.
- Use multiple stations, with 1 coach at each station, to keep players engaged and active.
- Explain rules and strategy during practice so that players understand what they are practicing and why. If scrimmaging or doing a modified scrimmage (e.g., teams of 3), make sure to stop and explain situations and defensive positioning.

Pre-game:

- Make batting line-up prior the game and post it in the dugout.
- Create positional roster for each inning prior to the game (need not be posted). Rotate kids through positions. Kids should never sit two innings in a row and should switch between IF and OF.

AS A COACH, YOU ARE A ROLE MODEL FOR ALL PLAYERS, COACHES, AND SPECTATORS. YOUR DUTY IS TO FOSTER A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE KIDS TO PLAY BASEBALL. HLL HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR ANY BEHAVIOR WHICH UNDERMINES THIS OBJECTIVE OF HLL.



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Batting

- Innings are the earlier of 3 outs or batting through the entire line-up
- Strikes will be called and a batter can strike out on a called or swinging third strike
- When coach is pitching, please error on the side of calling balls so player has an opportunity to swing (coaches should use their judgement regarding calling strikes and moving game along)
- If batter gets hit with ball, they take 1st base
- There are no walks. 4-balls will re-set the count.
- Batting order - everyone's line up should be rotational. Please keep the same order but remember who made last out of game so the next kid who would have gotten up, leads off next game (best hitters do not get more at-bats than everyone else)

Pitching

- Players may pitch only one inning per game
- Encourage only 1 player pitching per inning to keep the game moving
- Pitchers can pitch in front of the rubber when pitching (coaches should use their judgement based on players ability to reach home plate), but it should be clearly marked and to the extent possible, the pitching distance should be the same for both teams
- Pitchers are allowed to throw 4 balls before coach takes over pitching

Fielding

- 10 kids maximum in field, 4 must be in outfield (in the grass, in RF, RCF, LCF, and LF).
- Don't allow outfielders to creep into infield and make sure players are spread out in field at actual positions (to the extent possible)
- Instruct players to not throw the ball around. Throw the ball to pitcher and all runners must stop
- Once the ball is back to the pitcher, any runners on base are frozen and must return to the base from which they came unless they have reached the next successive base by the time the pitcher has the ball

Base Running

- No stealing or leading
- Players may only leave the base after pitched ball has crossed home plate or upon contact; however, no advancement on passed balls is allowed
- Tagging up is allowed
- Base-runners may advance ONE base on an overthrow
- Slide or avoid rule at all bases except 1st base. No headfirst slides unless returning to the base.

Coaching

- Coaches are encouraged to be in the field (with team) to help alert kids regarding # of outs, where they can make a force play, general positioning, and keeping them focused
- When team is hitting, an umpire will be calling balls and strikes.
- On field coach assumes pitching duties after 4 balls.
- Both teams are collectively responsible for post-game field duties, including cleaning dugouts; raking, dragging, and watering pitcher's mound; raking infield; filling in any holes; other repairs.