
1. Overview

This document is intended to provide a common set of rules and operating guidelines for the Thunderbird Tournaments which are held each year in the weeks before All Stars are announced. Each division, Majors, Coast and AAA have a tournament. These tournaments are run separately for AAA, Coast and Majors baseball divisions by the respective VP's. The Leagues operate each post-season Game tournament using **regular-season** rules set forth in the *Official Regulations and Playing Rules of Little League Baseball* ("Green Book"), with modifications specified in these Tournament Rules & Guidelines.

2. Tournament Administration

a. Tournament Oversight Committee

Each tournament shall have a Tournament Oversight Committee comprised of the president, UIC, VP and Player Agent for the Leagues. The role of the Tournament Oversight Committee is to decide on matters outside the scope of the Tournament Director's authority under Section 2(b).

b. Tournament Director

Each tournament shall have a Tournament Director appointed by the President of the League responsible for the tournament in a given year, it is presumed that the VP of each league is appointed unless the President make another affirmative appointment. The role of the Tournament Director is to administer all aspects of the tournament and to appoint others, as needed, to ensure the orderly conduct of the tournament. The Tournament Director can also resolve protests or disputes arising from the application or interpretation of rules on the field (see Section 14).

c. Dispute Escalation and Resolution

In the event that a situation arises during the tournament which is outside the scope of his or her authority as described in section 2(b), the situation will be escalated to the Tournament Oversight Committee for resolution. If after reviewing the facts of the situation, the Committee is unable to reach a decision by vote (i.e., 2-2 tie), then the Committee shall request the District 9 Administrator to cast the deciding vote, or appoint a delegate of appropriate knowledge and authority (e.g., D9 Umpire-In-Chief) to do so. The decision of the Committee will be final, and the tournament shall continue.

d. Tournament Umpire in Chief

The Thunderbird Umpire in Chief (UIC) shall serve as the UIC for each tournament. The role of the UIC is to manage recruiting, scheduling, and supervision of tournament umpires. The coordination of umpires may be delegated. The UIC can also resolve protests or disputes arising from the application or interpretation of rules on the field (see Section 16).

e. Pitch Count and Score Reporting (see also the Appendix to these rules)

Pitch counts and score reports must be submitted to the Tournament Director no later than 9:00 pm on the day of the game. (See sections 4 and 5 for more information about reporting scores and pitch counts.)

3. General Rules

a. Team Roster

Teams participating in the tournament must be **regular season teams** as defined in Green Book, and these teams must have been formed by the Leagues in compliance with Green Book regulations. Team managers must deliver their team rosters to the Tournament Director **three days prior** to their first tournament game. Team rosters must reflect that team's regular season roster. **A player must have participated in 60% of that team's regular season games to be included on the tournament roster.** **Exceptions** may be made in the case of excusable absence due to illness, injury, or other cause, as determined by the Tournament Director.

In the event that a team is unable to field 9 players for a tournament game, it is permissible to utilize pool players to replace missing players, up to a roster of 9 for the game. Pool players must have been assigned by a League's Player Agent according to the League's policy on replacement players, and they must be approved by the tournament director prior to the start of the game.

A team discovered to have an illegal player (or players) on their roster shall have that player (players) removed immediately and shall not be permitted to call up players to fill those slots in the roster. If the removal of illegal players results in a team roster falling below nine players, that team shall forfeit the remainder of their tournament games. If the use of illegal player or players is discovered after that team has won a tournament game, that game shall be declared a forfeit and the opponent declared the winner.

b. Lineups

The manager must provide a copy of their lineup to both the opposing team manager and the home plate umpire at the plate meeting prior to each game. Lineups must indicate each player's full name, jersey number, position in the batting order, and starting defensive position. Duplicate jersey numbers, if any, should be noted.

NOTE 1: All players in the lineup must be present and ready to play at the time lineups are exchanged. Any player not present at this time must be treated as a late-arriving player (see Green Book rule 4.01(d) Note).

NOTE 2: Managers are required to **indicate ineligible pitchers on lineup cards** by circling the names of players that are not eligible to pitch in that game. Failing to indicate ineligible pitchers on lineup cards subjects the manager to penalties for using ineligible pitcher or player outlined in **Rule 10**.

NOTE 3: Managers are required to **indicate replacement pool players on lineup cards** in a clear, concise manner. Failing to indicate replacement players on lineup cards subjects the manager to penalties for using ineligible players outlined in **Rule 10**.

c. Adult Game Coordinator

An adult game coordinator must be assigned at every Little League game where the umpires are minors (under age 18). **Every tournament team shall provide at least one adult volunteer to serve in this capacity.** When the home team is determined by coin toss before the game, the **home** team shall then provide an adult game coordinator, if necessary. Note that in cases where one of the regularly scheduled umpires is an adult (18 or older), no adult game coordinator is required. The adult game coordinator shall have the duties and authority specified in **Green Book rule 9.09(d)**.

d. Field Setup

Both teams should provide assistance with preparing the fields.

4. Tournament Games

a. Time limits

The following guidelines shall be followed with regard to time limits:

1. Majors Division:

No new inning shall start after two hours and fifteen minutes (2:15), and the game shall end at the completion of the final inning played.

2. Coast Division:

No new inning shall start after two hours and fifteen minutes (2:15), and the game shall end at the completion of the final inning played.

3. AAA Division:

No new inning shall start after two hours (2:00), and the game shall end at the completion of the final inning played.

EXCEPTION: There shall be no time limit for tournament championship games, nor the follow-up Championship game should the loser's bracket team win the first one; these games shall be played to their conclusion so far as weather and lighting conditions allow.

NOTE: If the time limit is reached during play, the game ends and the score reverts to the score at the conclusion of the last complete inning. If the score is tied at the conclusion of the last complete inning, see Section 4(c), below.

EXCEPTION: If time expires while the home team is at bat, *and if the home team is leading*, then the game ends and the home team is declared the winner and the score will not revert to the score from the previous inning.

b. Run Limits

There shall be a 4-run per inning limit in the AAA division (no run limit in the 6th, or last, inning). There shall be a 5-run per inning limit in the Coast division (no run limit in the 6th, or last, inning). To comply with the time limits for AAA and Coast divisions, the plate umpire and coaches should agree on the last inning if approaching the time for starting the last inning, so that teams will be allowed unlimited runs. There shall be no run limit in the Majors division.

c. Mercy Rule

If one team leads by ten or more runs at the conclusion of four innings (or 3 ½ innings if the home team leads), then the game ends.

d. Ties

Ties will be an acceptable result of a pool play game. In the case of bracket play, the following rules will apply:

1. If tied at the conclusion of regulation play, play extra innings until a winner is determined.
2. If a game that is being played under a time limit is tied when reaching the end of the final inning, revert to the score on concluding the last full inning of play in which the score was not tied (but not earlier than four complete innings). If the score at that point remains a tie, then the game is decided by the toss of a coin. The plate umpire conducts the coin toss.
3. If a game is tied when halted due to rain, darkness, or other condition, and if an "official" game has been played, then revert to the score at the last full inning of play in which the score was not tied (but not earlier than four complete innings). If the score at that point remains a tie, then the game is decided by the toss of a coin. The plate umpire conducts the coin toss.

e. Fields

Fields that are not enclosed by an outfield fence may be marked with cones and/or paint to indicate a home run line at approximately 200 feet from home plate (for Majors and Coast), or 180 feet from home plate (for AAA). The League running the tournament shall make clear to the other Leagues which fields are considered enclosed by an outfield fence, and which fields may be marked.

- A fly ball that carries over this line before grounding shall be a home run.

- A fly ball that carries over this line after being touched or deflected by a defensive player shall be a home run.
- A fly ball that is caught while the defensive player has any portion of one or both feet beyond the cones is a home run.
- A fly ball that is caught and then carried past the cones (“catch and carry”) is an out, live ball, as with any ordinary caught fly ball.
- A ball that touches the ground before reaching the cones and then travels beyond the cones, touched or untouched by a fielder, is a ground-rule double and all base runners shall advance 2 bases from the start of the play. If in the umpire’s judgment the fielder intentionally kicks or otherwise directs the ball past the line, the umpire may award the batter 3rd base.

f. **Suspended Games**

If a game is halted by darkness, rain, or other uncontrollable condition before becoming an official game (but after completing one full inning), the game must be resumed at a later time at precisely the point it was suspended.

If a game is halted by darkness, rain, or other uncontrollable condition after becoming an official game, revert to the score at the last completed inning, or half-inning if the home team leads. If this score is a tie, see Section 3.c, above.

If conditions are such that resuming play of a suspended game is impossible, the Tournament Director shall determine a means for determining the winner.

g. **Home Team**

The home team is determined by toss of coin 30 minutes before game. The home team shall occupy the 3rd-base dugout. The home team shall provide the umpire with two game balls at the start of the game, and additional game balls as necessary during the course of the game.

5. **Scorekeeping & Score Reporting**

- a. **The home team score book is the "official book" for that game.** However, both teams must have a scorekeeper and scorekeepers for both teams shall compare books and pitch counts each half-inning. The official book must record the time of first pitch as the official starting time for the game.
- b. **The manager of each team is responsible for reporting pitch counts and game scores** to the Tournament Director following their games no later than 9:00 pm on the day of the game.
- c. **NOTE:** In the event of a discrepancy between reporting teams for a given game score or pitch counts, if the discrepancy cannot be resolved, ***the home team ("official") report prevails.***

6. **Pitch Counts & Pitch Count Reporting**

- a. Each team shall have a person designated to maintain an accurate pitch count. The pitch counter for each team shall record pitch counts for pitchers on **both** teams.
- b. The persons recording pitch counts for their respective teams shall reconcile their respective pitch counts every half-inning. If there are discrepancies all attempts should be made to reconcile the pitch count.
- c. If pitch-count discrepancies recur in three inning in a given game, the game shall be halted and the Tournament Director, the UIC, or other tournament official shall be contacted and a neutral pitch counter will be inserted into the game.

7. **Manager and Coaches**

Each team is permitted to have one adult manager and two adult coaches. There must be one adult in the dugout at all times. There shall never be more than three adults permitted in the dugout.

8. **Replacement players, manager, coaches**

Any player, manager, or coach who is unable to participate in the tournament play due to injury, illness, or other justifiable reason may be replaced by another eligible person. Replacement players, manager, and coaches must be approved by their leagues Player Agent and the Tournament Director.

Additionally, there are other restrictions for replacement players.

- a. Replacement players are to come from the Majors division (not a lower division). They cannot miss their own team's game to play in the other game.
- b. Replacement players can only be used if they prevent a forfeit. I.E. they give the team the 9 players to necessary to legally start a game.
- c. Replacement players cannot pitch, must play an outfield position, and must bat last in the teams batting order.
- d. Replacement players must be noted on the roster and pointed out to the opposing coach at the pregame meeting.
- e. If an officially rostered player arrives late to the game, they replace the replacement player in the game. The restrictions are lifted for the regular player and the replacement player is removed from the game for good.

9. Ejection of player, manager, or coach

Any player, manager, or coach who is ejected from a game by the umpire for any reason shall leave the field immediately, and shall be ineligible to play, manage, or coach in the next tournament game. If ejected a second time, that player, manager, or coach is permanently suspended. Any coach or manager who is ejected or suspended may not be replaced by a replacement coach, as discussed in Section 6.

10. Pitch count limits and rest requirements

Comply with regular season Green Book regulations (**Regulation VI**) regarding pitch count and rest requirements for pitchers.

11. Use of ineligible player or pitcher

The use of ineligible pitcher or player is a protestable condition. A protest should be made as soon as the protestable condition is noticed. Penalties may be imposed, but the use of an ineligible player or pitcher is not grounds for forfeiture. If there is a dispute about the eligibility of a pitcher or player, this shall be resolved by the Tournament Director before continuing with the game, and the decision of the Tournament Director is final.

- a. If the protest is made BEFORE the start of the game (before the first pitch), the ineligible player must be removed from the team roster, or the ineligible pitcher must be replaced, and the game shall begin normally and no penalties imposed.
- b. If the protest is made DURING the game, the ineligible player must be removed from the team roster, or the ineligible pitcher must be replaced, and the game shall continue normally. The manager of the offending team shall be penalized per rule (below).
- c. If the protestable condition is noticed after the game has concluded, the protest must be made before the umpires leave the field of play. If the protest is upheld, the offending team manager shall be penalized per rule (below).

12. Penalty for use of ineligible player or pitcher

- a. On the first instance a valid protest for using an ineligible player or pitcher, the manager of the offending team shall receive a written reprimand from the Tournament Director.
- b. On the second instance of a valid protest for using an ineligible player or pitcher, the manager of the offending team shall be suspended for remainder of the tournament.

13. Batting order & substitutions

Tournament play will employ a continuous batting order in which all rostered players in the lineup take at-bats in their assigned position in the batting order. Tournament play allows for free substitution of players on defense.

14. Mandatory play requirement

Little League Green Book requires that every rostered player who is present for the game must play a minimum of six defensive outs. **See Green Book Regulation IV(i) for more information.**

NOTE 2: Any player who does not meet his minimum play requirement for any reason must have his name and details of the noncompliance recorded in the scorebook, and a report on the details of the noncompliance must be reported along with the daily score and pitch-count report. See Regulation VI(i) for penalties and requirements.

15. Player arriving late

Any player who arrives late to a tournament game may be inserted into the game at the bottom of the lineup. **See Green Book, Regulation IV(i) for more detail.**

16. Protests

Any protest of the misapplication of a rule *shall be resolved at the time of the incident and before any additional pitch is delivered.*

- a. There shall be no protests of judgment calls by an umpire.
- b. Disputes that arise from the perceived misapplication of a rule will be discussed with the umpires on the field. If no resolution is reached, the Tournament Director, the Umpire in Chief, or other appointed Tournament official will be called in to make a ruling. ***The ruling of the tournament official shall be final.***
- c. If a tournament official cannot be reached, the decision of the umpire shall be final.

17. Rainouts

In the event of a rainout, the Tournament Director will reschedule games subject to field availability and this may require teams to play games on consecutive days. In case there are a large number of rainouts, the Tournament Director reserves the right to cancel the loser's bracket and make it a single-elimination tournament.