

London & District Baseball Association (LDBA)
House League Operating & Playing Rules 18U/22U

House League Operating Rules:

PLAYER AGE GROUPING

All players must play in their own age grouping unless otherwise approved by the Board of Directors.

DIAMOND DIMENSIONS

Division	Pitching Rubber	Between Bases
18U/22U	60'-6"	90'

PLAYING RULES GENERAL INFORMATION

In general, LDBA follows the rules of professional baseball and as modified by the most recent edition of the Ontario Baseball Association (OBA) Playing Rules. Further exceptions are listed that apply to all age divisions and on the appropriate page where they apply to a specific Division. Please see the Baseball Ontario ON DECK App for details.

Each team shall have a pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, right fielder, and a centre fielder in the line-up.

Infielders can ask for time in the infield area. Time will be given at the umpire's discretion when continuous action from the play has stopped. **NOTE:** The ball does not have to go back to the pitcher before an infielder may ask for time. Continuous action ends when the defense stops trying to field the baseball, and the offense stops trying to advance.

Once time has been granted by the umpire, the ball is returned to the pitcher. At this time, the plate umpire should say "Play" to make the ball live. The defensive pitcher may ask the offensive coach for the ball so they can make an appeal by tagging the base or the runner and indicating to the umpire the runner missed the base/left early/etc. The offensive coach must give the ball to the defensive player when requested. As per the Official Rules of Baseball, appeals must be made while the ball is live on either the base that was missed by a runner or the runner, as long as the defense indicates clearly that an appeal is being made.

The plate umpire shall be behind the catcher. The second umpire is the traditional base umpire.

Coaches and players are required to wear a mask while warming up a pitcher anywhere in the ball park (including behind the dugout or in the bullpen). **Penalty: First Offense the Team will receive a warning, The second offense - the offending person will be ejected.**

Helmets for player base coaches - All players under the age of 18, coaching on the bases **MUST** wear a helmet with ear flaps.

Up to three games may be played in one day.

GAME TIME

All regular season games start at 6:00 p.m. sharp unless scheduled otherwise or advised otherwise by the Division Convener. There will be no infield practice after 5:50 p.m. (or 10 minutes before scheduled game time). Playoff game time is 6:00 p.m. sharp. **Umpires will be instructed to allow a 15-minute grace period to a team not having the required number of players to begin the game. Teams may play with a minimum of 7 players, with automatic outs for the 8th and 9th batter, unless both teams agree to waive this rule. Players arriving late will be added to the bottom of the batting order irrespective of the inning when they arrive.**

Umpire shall be the official timekeeper or the Umpire may appoint an official timekeeper.

LENGTH OF GAMES

Division	Full Game	Minimum Innings for Official Game		“No New Inning after”	Curfew Time Limit (Game is over)	Mercy Rule per inning	Mercy Rule
		Home Lead	Visitor Lead				
18U/22U	7 innings	4 ½	5	1hr 45 min*	2hrs 15 mins	None	10 runs after 5 innings 15 runs after 4 innings 18 runs after 3 innings

Unless otherwise agreed to by coaches at ground rules, the game will end at the specified **“curfew time limit”** even if the inning isn't complete. The player at bat when curfew is reached will be permitted to complete their turn at bat. A batter will be determined to have started their turn at bat at the moment the previous batter has completed theirs (e.g., they are called out, awarded a walk or any play as a result of their at bat has ended). The score will be that reported at the last complete inning. For example: No new inning after 1 hour and 45 minutes; if game is not resolved by the 2 hour and 15-minute mark, the game stops dead and the final score reverts to the score of the last completed inning.

EXTRA INNINGS

There will be NO extra innings during the regular season. Ties will stand with each team receiving one point. Extra innings will be allowed in a playoff or tournament game.

PARTICIPATION

Since this is a development division, all players must play a different position from game to game throughout the regular season, wherever possible. The goal would be to have each player play every position during the regular season. There is no penalty for failure to do this.

However, if the players are to develop and enjoy the game, time spent in various positions will encourage them.

All players participating in House League will play a minimum of **three** innings per game. There will be nine defensive positions, consisting of six infielders and three outfielders. Teams with only seven players in attendance at particular game may still play. All players **MUST** play at least 2 innings per game in a defensive position. Any player playing only two innings in a game in a defensive position is not allowed to spend both innings in the outfield. The only exception will be game ejection, injury or absence and in such cases, it must be noted on the official Game Card. Failure to adhere to this rule could result in game forfeiture.

Teams will use a continuous batting order. All players present at each game will be given a position in the batting order and they will take their regular turn at bat even when not in the defensive lineup for that inning. The batting order will be determined prior to the start of the game and will not change during the game. The batting order must **rotate** from game to game so that every player has an opportunity to bat in each position. Every player shall have the opportunity to learn as many positions as they wish and **not** be limited to only **one** position.

Game Attendance - Players on 18U and 22U teams must be listed on 50% of **score sheets** to be eligible to participate in playoffs. Exceptions must be approved by the Division Convenor

Overage Players – 22U teams are allowed a maximum of **6 overage players** based on the following criteria:

- The player cannot pitch or catch
- **The overage player(s) must be declared before the game**
- Must be a first-year senior player
- Must have played on the team the previous year

BASE RUNNERS

Leading off is permitted.

Stealing bases is permitted.

Bunting is permitted.

Batters may advance to first base on a third strike missed by the catcher. (If first base is occupied and there are less than two out the batter is out, by the official rules of baseball.)

A BALL THAT IS PITCHED OR THROWN OUT OF PLAY...where a ball is pitched or thrown out of play, and for the purpose of base awards, the Official Rules of Baseball (ORB) will apply...except in the case of a play where Rule #4 applies and then Rule #4 takes precedence over the ORB (Clarification on Rule #4 precedence: R2 is stealing 3rd and the Catcher, in an attempt to get R2 at 3rd, throws the ball out of play. Rule #4 takes precedence so there is no additional base award on the ball thrown out of play. R2 remains at 3rd).

Infield fly rule applies.

PITCHING RULES

For purposes of this rule, a pitch is a pitch thrown to a batter that results in a ball or strike (subject to the balk rule below). It does not include warm-up pitches.

Unless otherwise agreed, the Home Team will be the official scorekeeper and pitch count recorder.

Any player advancing to play in a higher series shall be restricted to the pitching rule of the series in which they are registered. 15U call ups must follow 15U pitching rules for 18U. 18U call ups must follow 18U pitching rules for 22U.

From 11U to 18U, a pitcher once removed from pitching, regardless of the number of trips to the mound by the manager/coach, may continue in the game at another position, but shall not be permitted to return to pitch in that game. From 15U to 22U, a second trip by a manager/coach to the same pitcher in the same inning shall result in the pitcher's automatic removal from the pitching position. The pitcher, once removed after the 2nd trip in an inning, may continue in the game at another position but shall not be permitted to return to pitch in that game.

Pitch Count Limitations

A pitcher may not pitch more than the following limits in a calendar day. If the limit is reached while facing a batter, the pitcher may pitch to the earlier of: (i) the completion of that batter or (ii) the end of the inning.

18U - 100 pitches

If a pitcher throws more than the following limits in a calendar day they cannot pitch the next day – the player must have 2 nights rest.

18U - 75 pitches

Where a team has multiple games on the same day, if a pitcher throws more than the following limits during a game or in combination of one or more games, the pitcher may not pitch again in a subsequent game that day:

18U - 75 pitches

For example:

Example 1 – 2 games in 1 day

1. Game 1 Pitcher throws less than 76 pitches – Eligible for Game 2
 - Total pitch count for Game 1 and Game 2 less than 76 eligible for next day unless it is third day in a row
 - Total pitch count Game 1 and Game 2 greater than 75 pitches, pitcher not eligible for next day.

2. Game 1 Pitcher throws more than 75 pitches – Not eligible for game 2 and not eligible for next day.

Example 2 – 3 games in 1 day

1. Game 1 Pitcher throws less than 76 pitches – Eligible for Game 2
 - Total pitch count Game 1 and Game 2 less than 76 pitches – Pitcher eligible for game 3
 - Total pitch count for Games 1, 2 and 3 less than 76 pitches – Pitcher eligible for next day unless it is the 3rd day in a row.
 - Total pitch count for Game 1 and Game 2 greater than 75 pitches – Pitcher is not eligible for 3rd game and next day.
2. Game 1 Pitcher throws greater than 75 pitches – Pitcher not eligible for Game 2 or Game 3 and the next day.
3. Game 1 Pitcher does not pitch, throws less than 76 pitches in Game 2 – Eligible for Game 3
 - Total Pitch count for Game 2 and Game 3 less than 76 pitches – Pitcher eligible for next day unless 3rd day in a row.
 - Total Pitch count for Game 2 and Game 3 greater than 75 pitches – Pitcher not eligible next day.
4. Game 1 pitcher throws greater than 75 pitches – Not eligible for Game 2, Game 3 and next day.
5. Game 1 pitcher does not pitch, throws more than 75 pitches in Game 2 – Not eligible for Game 3 and next day.

Balks

Balks will be called at the discretion of the umpire. The umpire will issue one warning per team. This should be discussed at the plate during the pre-game talk. Where a balk warning is called by the umpire, this will be a delayed dead ball situation. If all runners advance one base, the balk will be ignored. If a runner, who has not advanced one base from the time of the pitch, is put out on the balk warning, the runner will be returned to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch. If a runner advances more than one base and is then put out, the out will stand and the "one" warning per team" will be lost to that team.

The official scorekeeper shall designate the official pitch count recorder.

The official pitch count recorder must provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either manager or the umpire.

The official pitch count recorder shall inform the home plate umpire when a pitcher has delivered their limit of pitches for the game. The home plate umpire will then notify the pitcher's manager that the pitcher must be removed.

It is the responsibility of the manager to remove a pitcher when that pitcher is no longer eligible, even if the pitch count recorder and/or the umpire fail to notify the manager.

If a team has no remaining players eligible to pitch in a game, the opposing coach may designate a player who has yet to pitch in the game. This pitcher may not throw more than 30 pitches. If the limit is reached while facing a batter, the pitcher may pitch to the earlier of (i) the completion of that batter, or (ii) the end of the inning.

At 18U, pitchers may not pitch on 3 consecutive calendar days unless:

- the pitcher threw 30 pitches or less on each of the first two days.
- the maximum number of pitches which may be thrown on the third day is 50.

At 22U, there is no restriction on pitchers pitching on 3 consecutive calendar days.

Illegal pitching penalty: where a player throws more pitches than is permitted under f); or pitches without the rest required by P2.10 g); or pitches on 3 consecutive days in violation of o); or pitches and catches in the same game in violation of q), the penalty shall be forfeiture by the player's team. A second violation by a team will result in the manager/head coach's indefinite suspension.

Pitches shall count on the calendar day on which the pitch is thrown. An exception shall be made where a game commences on one day and is played continuously past midnight. In that case, the pitches shall count as being thrown on the day on which the game commenced. In the case where a game is suspended, for whatever reason, on one day and resumed on a second day, pitches shall count on the calendar day on which the pitch is thrown (i.e., both parts of the game shall be considered on separate days). Where weather or other reasons cause the delay or postponement of a game or games, the time of the delay can count towards the nights rest required under g) and can constitute a break in the 3 consecutive day rule under n).

The pitching limits apply to every pitcher. For an ambidextrous pitcher, the limits and restrictions of P2.10 apply to the pitcher and not to each individual arm. For clarity, the pitches thrown with the right arm and left arm on a calendar day are added together to determine whether a pitch limit has been reached.

8.06 c) of the Official Rules of Baseball does not apply where a coach/manager goes to the mound to remove a pitcher in order not to exceed the pitch limits of P2.10 g)” Note: For this to apply, the second trip must be after the last pitch which could be thrown without exceeding the particular pitch count limit of P2.10g). For example, after the 65th pitch but before the 66th pitch at 15U.

CURVE BALLS may be thrown.

CONTACT RULE

No player shall maliciously run into another player. Contact is considered malicious if it involves:

- Intentional excessive force
- Intent to injure
- Deliberate attempt by a runner to dislodge the ball
- A runner making no legitimate effort to reach the base
- A runner who could have reasonably slid or otherwise avoided contact and still reached the base

Penalty: Player is ejected from the game and declared out. This rule is to be enforced using the following guidelines:

- ***Malicious contact is to be penalized whether committed by an offensive or defensive player. When a defensive player is ejected under this rule, the runner will be called safe or out according to the result of the play.***
- ***The ball is dead and all other runners shall return to their last legally occupied base at the time of the contact.***
- ***A runner guilty of malicious contact is out even if the fielder loses possession of the ball.***
- ***A runner guilty of malicious contact after scoring a run shall not be declared out, but is still ejected from the game.***
- ***This rule applies at home plate and all other bases.***

Incidental contact between players is allowed, as long it is not malicious as defined above. The rule does not prohibit contact, but requires players to slide or make a reasonable attempt to avoid contact.

When a defensive player blocks the base path while not in the act of fielding, obstruction shall be called according to the provisions of Rule 7.06(b). If this obstructed runner collides maliciously with the fielder, they would be ejected from the game. However, the obstructed runner could be called safe due to the obstruction according to the provisions of Rule 7.06(b).

CALL UPS

Any 18U/22U team that will be short of players for a game, may for that game, call up a player or players from the House League division immediately below, provided the player or players is/are registered member of the team playing out of the same park or zone. See the specific age division page for call up listings. Players cannot be called up if their registered team is scheduled to play.

The participation rule will apply: e.g., regardless of the number of players at the game, regular and call ups will play a minimum of 3 innings. Called up players are to be noted on the Game Card.

If the teams listed call ups are unavailable then that Manager may approach the next closest team to their home diamond. Once a player has been used as a call up to a certain team, then that player is to be used only by that team.

DESIGNATED HITTER, DESIGNATED RUNNER AND RE-ENTRY OF PLAYERS

There may sometimes be a need, due to health reasons, to compensate for a player who is unable to run, bat, etc. The Manager should discuss this with the Convener, who will review this with the Board and notify all Managers, so that the Board's decision is conveyed before games are played.

COURTESY RUNNER FOR CATCHER WITH 2 OUT

At all levels of play, courtesy runners for the catcher or any other players are prohibited.

RAIN OUT PROCEDURE

The **Home Team** manager/coach is responsible for checking their diamond playing condition when rain occurs. If the diamond is not suitable for play, they must notify the Umpire Assignor and visiting team manager/coach no later than **two hours** before game time. After all players are notified, **the Home Team Manager is responsible for rebooking the game within two weeks and it must be played before August 1.** The Home Team manager must confirm this with the Division Convener.

Note: Where a game is to be rescheduled, the Local Association's Umpire Assignor and Groundskeepers should be notified by the home team coach. Also see Rescheduling of Games.

EJECTIONS

When a team has a player ejected then the ejected or injured player's spot in the batting order will be removed but not counted as an automatic out. If a team starts with 9 players and has a player injured or ejected, then they can finish with 8 players but the 9th player's spot in the batting order will be an automatic out.

Players or coaches ejected from games are subject to additional suspensions. See Suspensions.

If a player or coach is ejected, umpires must submit an LDBA Ejection Report found on the LDBA website and include an email to their UIC. The UIC will notify additional persons as necessary (Convener, etc).

SUSPENDED GAMES

An Umpire has the right to suspend a game at their sole discretion. This could occur when a situation arises with which the Umpire is not comfortable continuing a game. This could be caused by a team and/or its supporters. In this case, the Umpire will declare the game suspended, to be resumed at a later date, as determined by the Board of Directors in conjunction with the Division Convener. Managers are urged to avoid these situations as they are not conducive to the method of operation of London District Baseball Association and may also lead to suspensions.

SUSPENSIONS

Ejection from a game for a Manager, Coach, or player will result in an additional suspension as per the LDBA Suspension Rule as amended November 2015. The suspensions are to be served

during the next scheduled games. Should there be subsequent ejections of the same person, the offending party will receive additional suspensions (as per the LDBA Suspension Rule) and may be asked to appear before the Board of Directors to show cause why they should be allowed to remain in the program.

STANDINGS

Standings will be computed on the basis of two points for a win and one point for a tie. Ties in the standings at the end of the regular season will be broken only to determine the Pennant Winner or if they affect the play-off pairings. Such ties will be broken by playing a single game between the two teams until a winner is declared. If more than two teams are tied, a suitable formula for breaking the tie will be put into place by the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Division Convener.

PROTESTS

No protests of an Umpire's judgment will be accepted or considered. The Manager of a protesting team shall state to the Plate Umpire 'I Protest' and state reasons for same. This shall be noted on the Game Card by the Umpire and signed by the Manager. The protest must occur at the time of the dispute and before another pitch is thrown. The plate Umpire will then announce that the game is being continued under protest. Separate statements from the Manager of the team involved and the plate Umpire of the game in question must be submitted in writing to the Division Convener within 24 hours of the completion of the game in question. A \$50.00 deposit must accompany the Manager's report, returnable **only** if the protest is upheld. All decisions made by the Board of Directors are **final**. If a protested game is to be replayed, the Board of Directors will set the time, date and place of the game.

DOUBLE HEADERS

Double Headers will only be played under extenuating circumstances and only with the approval of the Board of Directors.

SCOREBOOKS

The Home Team will keep the official score in their Scorebook listing all players participating in the game. After the game, both Managers must sign the Scorebook. The Home Team's Manager must then call in or email the score to the Division Convener. Any Ejections of Players, Managers, Coaches or Others, are to be reported to the Convener immediately after the game.

PLAYOFFS

The playoff structure for each division will be determined by the Board of Directors in consultation with the Division Conveners.

UNIFORMS

All players will be supplied with a full uniform (including league approved hats) which shall be worn in all games played. Coaches will be provided with an appropriate team or Association jersey which shall be worn at all games played. Repeated failure to wear a league supplied uniform item may be cause for suspension. No open toe shoes allowed on the field.

EQUIPMENT

All players in all divisions with the exception of catchers will supply their own gloves.

Players in all divisions shall wear athletic supporters with protective cups. Female players shall wear pelvic protectors.

Players must not voluntarily remove their helmet. Penalty first offense - warning; second offense - ejection.

Steel cleats can be worn.

All catchers are required to wear a mask with throat protector, helmet, chest protector, shin guards, cup and cup type supporter during the game and during any warm-up, machine set-up, etc.

The Home Team to supply a minimum of two new game balls for each regular season game and additional balls as required to complete the game.

For 18U/22U House League play, wood or wood composite bats are permitted with a diameter of **not more than 2 ¾"**.

15U call up must use 18U equipment including bats.

RESCHEDULING OF GAMES

No team may cancel a game with less than 24 hours notice (48 hours for Friday/Saturday/Sunday games) for any reason, except weather.

The Home Team is responsible for making arrangements of all rescheduled games. This is to be completed within two weeks of the original scheduled game **and it must be played before August 1**. The Home Team will offer the Visiting Team three makeup dates with only one of these being on a Saturday or Sunday, with the exception of teams that have Sunday as their home game night. The offered dates will be sent to the Visiting coach's and the Series Convenor's email. The Visiting coach/team has 72 hours from being offered to accept one of the offered dates. Failure to accept one of the dates will result in forfeiture of the game to the Home Team. The Visiting Team will accept by email copying the Series Convenor. If there is a conflict with all three dates, then the Series Convenor will make the decision to have the Home Team provide two more dates. (Playing multiple games in one week, Monday's following tournaments, etc., are not reasons to refuse dates). Fines can be levied for violations.

Note: Where a game is to be cancelled or rescheduled, the Local Association Umpire Assignor and Groundskeepers should be notified by the Home Team coach.

COMPLAINTS

Managers and Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns and only, if necessary, contact the division Convener, who will then consult the Board before any action is taken. The following is a list of steps which need to be taken in making a complaint:

1. Wait 24 hours (cooling off period).
2. Parents with a complaint are to first contact the Manager, and then, if necessary, the Convener. The Manager with a complaint is to first contact the Convener.
3. Once contacted by a Parent or Manager, the Convener will attempt to contact the other party to the complaint. The Convener will then explain both sides of the complaint to the Board. The Convener will advise both parties of the Board's response.
4. If a Parent or Manager is not satisfied after hearing from the Convener, they may submit a written complaint to the Board of Directors either by email, fax, or mail to LDBA. The Board will review the complaint and provide a written response, at which point the matter is considered closed.

Unless otherwise agreed, the Home team will be the official scorekeeper.

LIGHTNING SAFETY RULE

When thunder roars, go indoors! As soon as thunder is heard, the potential to be struck by lightning is present. Baseball Ontario mandates that **at first sound of thunder**, play is to be **suspended** and all participants are to seek shelter **until 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder**.

BENCH RESTRICTION RULE

In 2016, Baseball Ontario introduced a new tool for umpires to assist with game management - the bench restriction. This rule allows an umpire to restrict a coach or manager to their bench for the remainder of the game when they commit minor violations. *See Appendix for Baseball Ontario Bench Restriction Rule*

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use and possession of electronic devices on the **playing field** is now prohibited by **all participants**. **Electronic devices may be used in the dugout**. It is critical for the safety of all participants that everyone is focused on the field of play while the game is in progress. The use of electronic devices during a game is distracting and dangerous. Even between innings, it is still unsafe to lose focus and become distracted.

The intent of this rule is to keep everyone safe. This includes the following devices:

- Mobile phones
- Tablets
- Laptops
- Smart Watches & Fitbits

Penalty: Players, coaches, and managers will be instructed by the umpire to immediately remove them from the field of play. Failure to do so will result in ejection. Umpires who use

electronic devices on the field during the game are subject to suspension and potential loss of accreditation.

Exception: Dedicated watches, stopwatches and electronic pitch counters/indicators are permitted.