



2026 Rookie Ball Junior Division Rules and Guideline

GAME PRELIMINARIES

1. The Home team is responsible for field preparation. The infield must be dragged, hitting mat placed at home plate and the first and third baselines chalked. A parent volunteer or volunteers should be assigned to this task for each home game, and this typically takes at least 15 minutes to complete with two people working. Bases should be secured, 50' apart, with the orange half of the safety base to the right side of the first base foul line. Where possible, the visiting team is encouraged to also assist with field preparation and setup.
2. All baseballs used in practices and games for the **Rookie Ball Junior division are to be soft, T-Ball style baseballs.**
3. The L-screen should be set up so that a coach/parent volunteer is throwing to their own team from a distance of 23 feet (approx. 8 adult strides). An adult will be throwing off a bucket behind the L-screen. Pitches should be flat and at a speed that players can hit. Coaches can underhand front toss from the bucket to encourage players to put the ball in play.
4. After the diamond has been prepared, all equipment, such as screens to drag the field and chalk liners to mark the baselines and batter's boxes, must be returned to the equipment bins and the lid to the equipment bin must be closed during the game. You can leave the locks on the fence (up high, where children won't be able to reach them) while the game is played. Also, remember to return the keys to the lockbox and secure the lockbox before the game starts, so you don't accidentally take the keys home with you. A coach or parent volunteer must unlock the porta-potty at the diamond and lock it at the end of the game.
5. Before each game, after the field has been dragged, players on both teams should each pick up 5 to 10 rocks the size of a dime or larger. Rocks should be disposed of in the garbage bins near the player benches. This is as much to remove rocks as to instill a basic sense that diamond upkeep is the player's responsibility, not just for the parent volunteers to take care of. This is a core RMLL value and needs to be instilled at a young age.
6. ALL players must wear an athletic supporter or compression shorts and must provide their own batting helmet. We strongly recommend a batting helmet with a cage. RMLL does not provide any helmets. Players who forget their helmets will not be allowed to bat.
7. A team should have a minimum of six (6) players. All efforts should be made to play a game by splitting up the available players among the two teams. Scores are not recorded or reported to RMLL, and the focus should be on teaching kids to play the game and having fun – not on wins and losses.

8. It is **mandatory** for both teams must practice for the first 30-45 minutes of every Rookie Ball Jr event. Teams should split practice time on the infield and outfield.

PLAYING THE GAME

1. All defensive players may be on the field at the same time, but only five (5) can be in the infield (Pitcher, 1B, 2B, SS, and 3B). The pitcher must wear a helmet – this is mandatory. Coaches are also encouraged to run drills in the outfield with players not playing an infield position, rather than with players playing outfield positions.

2. Coaches may coach at any spot in the infield/outfield during games to guide and correct players, and coaches are advised to have a ball in their hand to work on catching/fielding skills in between batters where possible. Coaches can quickly correct and teach after each play to maximize learning opportunities for players.

3. All players should be rotated through all defensive positions. This is clearly not possible in any one game, but is easily done throughout the season. No player should play the same defensive position for more than one inning in any one game. The manager should keep a log of which innings each player on the team played by position (you will want to learn to do this).

4. While batting, a team can have two adult coaches or parent volunteers coaching at first base and third base, but only if there is another adult coach or parent volunteer supervising the player bench. Coaches or a parent volunteer pitch to their own team.

5. If a batted ball strikes the L-screen, the ball is dead, and the batter is awarded first base. All baserunners advance one base.

6. The pitcher should stand off to one side of the L-screen so they can clearly see the batter. The pitcher should always be at least 10 feet behind the L-screen. The pitcher cannot stand in front of or directly to the side of the L-screen to ensure player safety.

8. All players on the offensive team shall bat each inning (bat through your entire lineup).

9. Coaches will make safe/out calls on the bases and will agree jointly where necessary. Base runners who are called out are allowed to continue to run the bases. After June 1st, players who are forced out at any base will go back to the dugout.

10. Batters cannot walk but can strike out. There should be a maximum of seven pitches thrown to any one batter unless foul balls extend this. For clarity, every batter can receive up to seven pitches regardless of how many are strikes. They can swing at all seven pitches, and cannot strike out on a foul ball. Players who have not put the ball in play after seven pitches may use the tee to do so. Coaches should adjust their speed and throwing technique depending on the batter's abilities. Coaches can underhand-soft-toss off the bucket to players if needed.

11. Players are not allowed to lead off from bases. Runners may only advance on a batted ball. On hits contained in the infield, runners may advance one base only. On hits to the outfield, runners may advance until the ball is thrown back to the infield. Players between bases when the ball enters the infield may continue to the next base at their own peril and must stop at the next base. The infield is defined as the shale area of the diamond. Base runners cannot advance on overthrows.

12. The exception to (11) above is when the last batter is up. On a hit by the last batter, baserunners should all proceed around the bases and touch home plate. The last batter must be declared to the defensive team immediately prior to his/her turn at bat, and the defensive team should let all baserunners score before leaving the field to return to their bench.

13. The ball must be thrown overhand unless the fielder and the baseman are in very close proximity, necessitating an underhand throw. A rolled ball is not a throw, and a player put out as a result of a rolled ball will be declared safe.

14. Base runners hit by a batted ball shall be called out. Base runners hit by a thrown ball shall not be called out.

15. Do not throw the bat - Any time after a warning has been issued to both teams (which should occur at the first instance of a thrown bat), a batter who dangerously throws his/her bat can be removed from the batting order for the remainder of the game, at the discretion of the coaches. It is not a violation if a batter intentionally drops or tosses the bat to a clear area in foul territory, with the obvious intent of removing it safely from the home plate area.

16. There is a responsibility on both sides to avoid contact depending on the situation. There is a clearly defined responsibility on the part of the base runner to avoid contact with a defensive player who is playing the ball. Baserunners are encouraged to slide (except at first base) anytime they are unsure if a play is being made (i.e. the ball is being thrown to the base they are advancing toward).

17. It is the responsibility of the defensive player not to be in a position to cause contact when not playing the ball. A fielder must not block any part of a base or home plate unless he or she is in possession of the ball, nor position themselves in any way that might interfere with the path of the runner. Failure to do so is "obstruction," and the runners advance one base.

18. It is a common mistake to believe that a fielder must not be on the "baseline" as this "belongs" to the runner. As described in the paragraph above, that is generally the case. However, if a fielder is in the act of fielding a ball (waiting for a grounder or ready to make a catch on a ball thrown to him or her), it is the responsibility of the runner to avoid that fielder. Failure to do so is interference, and the runner is out.

19. The Infield Fly rule is not applicable in Rookie Ball Junior.

DURING THE GAME

1. There is no on-deck batter in Little League. There is no safe place for a player to warm up as a batter. The player is at risk of being hit by a batted ball, and spectators are at risk of being hit by the player's bat. The only player who should have a bat is the batter (Little League Rule). Parent volunteers can help enforce this rule for coaches.
2. Players not actively involved in the game should be sitting on the bench. All players should have their helmets on.
3. Teach your players to hustle on and off the field.

ENDING THE GAME

1. All games to be a maximum of six (6) innings, with no new innings to start after 8:00 pm. A new inning is deemed to have started once the third out is made in the preceding inning. Managers may elect to end the game at 8.00 pm or before 8.00 pm if weather conditions or other factors warrant ending the game.
2. An "official game" will be whatever was played, but teams should be playing ball for about 60 minutes and should be consistently playing three or more innings 2 weeks into the season.
3. Teams should have a cheer for their opponents and should line up along the first base and third base line and shake hands or tip their cap to their team.
4. After the game, the home plate area must be raked smooth and any large holes filled in.
5. Double-check before leaving that all equipment and bases have been put neatly back into the equipment bin and that: (a) the equipment bin is locked; (b) equipment keys have been put back in the lock box, and the lock box is closed securely; (c) the porta-potty door is locked.
6. Please report to the diamond coordinator (Diamonds@rockymountainlittleleague.com) if (a) chalk is running low; (b) there is a problem with the bases, or other items; (c) First-Aid supplies are low; or any condition exists which needs repair.

SAFETY NOTES

1. Any obvious injury results in an immediate stoppage of play. If any player is obviously injured during the course of a play where the ball has been hit, the ball is dead at that point and runners only advance to the base to which they were headed (Little League Rule).
2. All batters and base runners must wear helmets. The pitcher must wear a helmet.
3. Players must wear their full uniform, including baseball pants. Players are not permitted to wear shorts.
4. If lightning is observed in the area, the game must be cancelled, and all equipment and gear should be put away immediately. All players and adults should leave the area to ensure safety.
5. Parents are not permitted to leave the field unless another parent agrees to supervise their child (the coach is not able to stop the entire game if a child has a minor injury or has to use the bathroom, for example).

Note: If there is any injury during a game or practice, a Little League Injury Report must be completed and submitted to the Safety Coordinator within twenty-four (24) hours of the injury. These forms are on the RMLL website.