

8U 2019 Playing Rules

Lehigh Valley Cal Ripken League

(04/14/19)

This league will seek to implant in the youth of the community the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage and reverence so they may be finer, stronger and happier youths who will grow to be good, clean, healthy adults.

The 8U level has been developed to close the gap between Rookies & Minors by focusing on 5 key factors:

- Increase opportunities for kids to hit off other kids*
- Increase the batter's strike zone awareness – balls & strikes will be called*
- Develop catchers to prepare them for Minors*
- Increase the opportunities for baserunning (steals, extra bases, etc)*
- Develop our Coaches to better prepare them for Minors*

These rules do not take the place of any official Babe Ruth or Cal Ripken rules as published in the official baseball rulebook. These rules pertain to local league play only.

1. GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

- 1.1. The 8U level shall generally be comprised of 8-year-old players. No Player at this level shall be older than 8 on May 1st of the current year.
- 1.2. Game time is 5:45 PM, PROMPT, on weeknights. Night games will start no later than 8:30 PM on nights on which they are allowed. Saturday games' starting times are determined by mutual agreement between coaches, but no later than 6:00 PM without lights. Sunday games will start no earlier than 1:00PM (unless both teams agree). No inning will begin after 8:00 PM on school nights.
- 1.3. In the event of inclement weather, the home team shall be responsible for determining whether the game needs to be cancelled. If a game needs to be cancelled, the home team manager shall notify the necessary parties at least 1 hour prior to game time. A game needing to be rescheduled, must be rescheduled (not played) within 2 days.
- 1.4. Immediately following the meeting with the umpires at the plate, each team will take a position on their respective baselines, remove their hats and face the flag for the Pledge of Allegiance to be led by the home team manager. All fields are to have some American Flag visible from the field.
- 1.5. Visiting team has the field 25 min. prior to game time, for 20 minutes.
- 1.6. Home team will provide 2 new baseballs for each game. Game balls must have the official Cal Ripken logo.
- 1.7. A game is forfeited when a team fails to field 8 players at the start of the contest. When starting a game with only 8 players, the 9th spot in the batting order will be an automatic out each time that spot comes to the plate. If, with the game in progress, a player is injured and is forced to leave the game for good reason, or if a player leaves the game for any other reason, the game may be resumed with no less than 8 players, with the line-up spot(s) of the absent player(s) being considered an out the next time that spot comes to the plate, and simply skipped each time after that without counting as an out. If at any time, a team has 7 or fewer players, the team must forfeit, and the game must end.
- 1.8. Each team is required to have appropriate First-Aid supplies at all practices and games.

- 1.9. NO jewelry, except religious medals and Medical Alert bracelets & necklaces, will be allowed to be worn while playing. *Please note that a cross on a rope necklace (or something similar to that) will not be considered a religious medal.* NO throwing sleeves may be worn. Pitchers may wear long sleeve shirts under their jerseys if the sleeve on their pitching arm is not white.
- 1.10. Players, managers, coaches, and assistants must wear a face mask when warming up a pitcher, both on the sidelines and on the field between innings. Protective cups must be worn by ALL catchers, including warm-up catchers. It is highly recommended that all players, regardless of position, wear a protective cup.
- 1.11. There will be NO tobacco products, alcohol, or profanity allowed within the playing field, as described by field ground rules, including bench and dugout areas. Any violation will bring immediate expulsion, subject to rules set forth in the by-laws.

2. FIELD LAYOUT

8U

Baselines: 60 feet

Pitching distance: 40 feet

Pitcher's plate: 6 inches above home plate level

3. GAME RULES

- 3.1. **Length of Game** – For the regular season, no inning shall start after 1 hr 45 min. A standard game will be six innings. A game called because of darkness, rain, etc., does not need to be replayed. Games can end in a tie if shortened by darkness, rain, time, or field restrictions.
- 3.2. **Inning Limits** – Each half inning will be over after 3 outs are recorded, or 5 runs are scored, or after the 9th batter, whichever comes first. When the ninth batter of the inning steps to the plate, there are automatically 2 outs. A strikeout ends the inning. On a walk or hit batter - the ball is dead, runners advance only if forced – inning over. On a batted ball, the inning will end once the 5th run is scored, or an out is made, or when the ball is in the control of a defensive player within an 8' radius of the pitching rubber. The inning ends immediately. For example, if a runner is heading home when a defensive player has the ball within the 8' pitching radius, the run will not score. *Coaches are reminded that we should be teaching sound baseball and trying to prepare kids for the next level of play. Coaches should teach runners to advance an appropriate number of bases based on the hit.*
- 3.3. **Playing Requirements** - Players are required to play in both the infield and outfield in every game and can't sit for more than one consecutive inning (i.e. no sitting in back to back innings). Every player must play in the infield in at least one of the first 3 innings. Teams will be allowed to play with 10 defensive players (i.e. 4 outfielders).
- 3.4. **Free Substitution** and running batting order shall be mandatory.
- 3.5. **Throwing Equipment** - Throwing equipment as a result of anger shall result in automatic expulsion by the umpire. A bat thrown as a result of poor grip shall result in a warning by the umpire. A second offense by the same player will result in an automatic out and the player sitting for the rest of the game. An automatic out will be recorded each time that players spot comes up in the batting order. This is not considered an ejection from the game.
- 3.6. **Scores** – Scorebooks shall be kept. The Home team shall report the final game score and pitching stats to the league statistician within 24 hours of the completion of the game.

4. PITCHING RULES

- 4.1. The first 2 innings of each game shall be coach pitch. All subsequent innings will be 100% player pitch. Balls & Strikes will be called during the at bats. Play will proceed with a single game ball, where the catcher throws the ball back to the pitcher after each pitch.
 - a. Coach Pitch – During coach pitch innings, a coach for the offensive team will pitch to his batters. When a coach is pitching, batters can strike out, but cannot walk. If a coach throws 4 balls to a batter, the ball count resets to zero. The strike count stays wherever it was.
 - b. Player pitch - During player pitch innings, batters can strike out and walk.
- 4.2. **Pitch Types** - Pitchers may only throw fastballs, change ups or knuckleballs.
- 4.3. **Pitching Limits** - A pitcher may not pitch in more than one (1) inning in any game and may not pitch in three (3) consecutive games. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes pitching one inning.
- 4.4. **Pitch Counts** – In addition to the innings limitation, pitch counts will also be assessed to determine a pitcher’s eligibility to continue. A pitcher will be allowed to throw a maximum of thirty-five (35) pitches. If the pitcher reaches 35 pitches while in the middle of a batter, they will be allowed to finish the batter. All pitches count toward the total pitch count (except warm up pitches).
- 4.5. Once a player is removed as a pitcher, he may not pitch again in the same game.
- 4.6. Innings pitched in a game declared "no contest" shall be charged against the pitchers’ consecutive games eligibility.
- 4.7. **Warm-Up** - In order to speed up the game, a pitch warm-up rule is in effect. Eight (8) pitches will be allowed for each starting pitcher in the first inning and 5 pitches in each subsequent inning. When a team changes pitchers, the new pitcher will get 8 warm-up pitches, then 5 for each subsequent inning he pitches. If the catcher is late, allow him to receive 1 pitch to throw down. Warm-up pitches are not part of the pitch count.
- 4.8. **Balks** - There are no Balks at this level.
- 4.9. There is a time limit of 3 minutes between innings.
- 4.10. **Pitching changes** - MUST be reported to the umpire AT THE TIME OF THE CHANGE. The pitcher will not be allowed to warm up on the mound until he has reported to the umpire.
- 4.11. **2nd trip** to mound in same inning requires automatic removal of pitcher.
- 4.12. **HBP** - A pitcher must be removed after hitting 3 batters.
- 4.13. **Violation** of any section of this regulation can result in protest/forfeit of the game
- 4.14. Coaches need to agree on the # of pitches at the end of each inning.

5. GENERAL PLAYING RULES

- 5.1. **Advancement** – Advancement on a batted ball won’t be restricted to just “Station to station”, however, it will still be restricted (to prevent excessive baserunning that takes advantage of young player’s developing skills & abilities). On a hit to the outfield, there shall be no additional advancement beyond when the ball is picked up and in control of the outfielder. For example, if a runner has rounded 1st and is headed for 2nd when the outfielder controls the ball, the runner can still attempt to reach 2nd base. He CANNOT, however, advance beyond 2nd, even if the throw in from the outfielder is mis-played. There shall be no advancement on any overthrows.
- 5.2. **Avoiding Contact** - In the interest of safety, fielders & runners shall avoid unnecessary contact.

- a. Catchers CANNOT block the plate if they do not have the ball, nor can they go up the line to wait for a throw, thus blocking the runner.
 - b. **All runners must slide to any base attempted, if being played on to avoid a collision with a fielder.** The first offense will result in the umpire issuing a team warning to the offending team. Subsequent violations by that team will result in an automatic out.
 - c. *HEAD FIRST SLIDES ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED EXCEPT WHEN RETURNING TO A BASE!*
 - d. Any unnecessary or inappropriate contact with the fielder, in the opinion of the umpire, will result in the runner being called out. In addition, any willful and malicious contact with the fielder, in the opinion of the umpire, will result in the runner being called out and the runner being ejected from the game, subject to suspension according to the by-laws.
- 5.3. **Stealing** – During player pitch innings, open stealing of 3rd base ONLY is allowed. The runner may not leave the base until after the pitch crosses home plate. For purposes of this rule, “stealing” shall mean straight stealing and advancement on a passed ball. The following restrictions will be in effect:
- a. There will be no stealing of 2nd base or home.
 - b. Leading – Players may take a lead after the ball crosses the plate, but not for the purpose of advancement.
 - c. Leaving Early - Base runners who leave the base early (i.e. before the pitched ball passes the plate), in an attempt to steal will be sent back to the original base and the team will be given a warning. Next offense by that team, runner is out.
 - d. During the steal attempt, the runner will be allowed a maximum of one base of advancement, even if during the course of the play, the catcher overthrows the base while trying to throw the runner out. For example, a runner on 2B steals 3B, and the catcher overthrows the ball in to LF, the runner must hold on 3B.
 - e. The catcher’s attempt to throw out the stealing runner will automatically freeze all runners from further advancement even if the ball is overthrown. After the stealing runner is deemed safe or out, the ball is dead until the pitcher has the ball and takes the mound again.
 - f. The catcher shall not throw “behind” the runner in an attempt to pick him off, nor shall the pitcher attempt to pick off a runner returning to a base.
 - g. There is no stealing during coach pitch innings.
 - h. *NOTE: Coaches are reminded that we should be teaching sound baseball and trying to prepare kids for the next level of play. Overly aggressive base running (i.e. excessive leads after the pitch, baiting of pitchers, etc.) should be discouraged*
- 5.4. **Mercy Rule** - Once a 10-run lead is acquired - NO stealing or advancement on passed balls allowed. A 15-run mercy rule will be in effect after 4 innings (3 ½ if the home team is winning) and a 10-run mercy rule will be in effect after 5 innings (4 ½ if the home team is winning). This will result in an end to the contest and the team in the lead declared the winner. No game shall continue after the Mercy Rule has taken place, not even if the coaches agree
- 5.5. **Fielder Injury** - In case of fielder injury due to batted ball, ball is dead, batter and/or all runners advance one base, even if they are not forced.
- 5.6. **Infield Fly** - The Infield Fly Rule will NOT be used.

- 5.7. **Courtesy Runner** - A courtesy runner for the catcher may be used only when there are two outs. There will be no courtesy runner for the pitcher. The courtesy runner will be the player who made the last out
- 5.8. **Bunting** – Bunting is NOT allowed at this level.
- 5.9. **Dropped 3rd Strike** - The dropped third strike rule will NOT be used.

6. MISCELLANEOUS RULES

- 6.1. **Coaches** – Teams shall have a maximum of one manager & 3 coaches. Coaches are not permitted in the field during play (except when pitching).
- 6.2. **Umpires** - One umpire will be provided for each game by the umpire assignor. The home team will be responsible to pay the umpire the currently agreed amount. In the event the umpire does not show up for the game, the game can still happen. The teams just need to agree on a parent to fill in the for the umpire
- 6.3. **Schedule** - The game schedule will be finalized at the league scheduling meeting. A representative from each team must attend the meeting. After the schedule meeting, there will be a \$25 fee for any games that need to be rescheduled, unless the reschedule is due to weather or a school function.
- 6.4. **Protests** - The Policy Committee will hear all protests. All protests must be submitted, by fax, mail or e-mail, to the Policy Committee Chairman within 48 hours of game, along with a non-refundable \$25 check payable to LVCRL. Protests must follow the rules of major league baseball.
- 6.5. **Call-up Players** - Teams may roster a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 players. Each organization shall identify a pool of at least 5 players that are currently at Rookies and at least 5 players that are currently rostered in 8U who can be “called-up” in the event that the higher-level team needs more players for a game. The lists of Call-up players must be submitted to the league player agent prior to the start of the season. If a Call-up player plays up a number of times equal to 50% of his regular scheduled games, he must remain at the higher level permanently. Players that are called-up cannot pitch. **All kids being called-up must be reported to league player agent, league president and the opposing manager, in writing, prior to the start of the game.** Players that are called-up are subject to comply with the minimum playing requirements.
- 6.6. **Tournament Teams** - Players must try out for the league age post season tournament teams. They cannot try out for an upper level team unless there are not enough players at the level. They must try out for their league age team first and if selected cannot move up to the next level unless they are released by the lower team head coach.
- 6.7. **End of Season** – Standings will not be kept through the regular season. There will be an end of season tournament. Seeding for the tournament will be by “luck of the draw”. A Banner will be awarded to the winner of the end of season tournament.

7. CAL RIPKEN BAT RULES (from www.baberuthleague.org/bat-rules.aspx)

CAL RIPKEN BASEBALL DIVISION

All non-wood bats must have the USABat Marking. The Barrel Maximum is 2 5/8". No BBCOR Bats are permitted in the Cal Ripken Division.

If a player steps in the batter box with an illegal bat, the player will be ejected with an out being counted every time they would have come to the plate. Additionally, the coach will be suspended for 2 games and a \$250 fine will be levied to the organization.