

2020 LITTLE LEAGUE SUMMER INTERLOCK RULES

Guidelines and Protocols

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INTRODUCTION

This document is an addendum to our regular rules documents which are:

- *The Official Little League Rules* (the “green book” which is now blue) apply as usual. There are no new rules applicable for 2020. A copy of the rule book may be available from league Presidents, or it can be downloaded to your mobile device for a nominal charge.
- *The interlock rules* found at <http://d2llontario.ca> also continue to apply, **except for the adjustments set out in this supplementary document.**

All teams must follow regulations set out by the Province of Ontario, and the City of Ottawa. Teams may under no circumstance play or practice outside the “league/bubbles” in which they have been placed for interlock. Failure to abide by these conditions will result in suspension from interlock. All players must be registered in their home leagues. There will be NO fees for leagues to enter interlock play for the 2020 season.

ADJUSTMENTS TO INTERLOCK RULES

No call ups from other divisions, nor call overs from teams in other bubbles – players may not play outside their own bubble even if they originate from the same league.

Forfeits: In an effort to minimize forfeits, teams may borrow players from the opposing team. Teams may also pick up available players from teams in the same bubble. The goal is to play games, not enforce forfeits given the limited season and traveling necessary in interlock. Teams that know in advance that they cannot field a team must inform the opposing head coach and convenor as soon as possible and will be subject to forfeit.

Time limit: No new inning will commence 2 hours after the scheduled start time.

Complete game: As usual, 5 innings is a complete game. However, if the 2 hour time limit has been reached the game will be considered complete regardless of the number of innings played

Back to back games: We have tried not to schedule back to back games at the same diamond, but where necessary, **there must be a 45-minute buffer in between so that players and spectators do not cross paths while vacating and arriving to the park.** This means that the first game will have no new inning 1 hour 45 minutes after the scheduled start time, and a hard stop at 2 hours, reverting to the last complete inning if necessary. Prompt departure from the field is required after sanitizing is completed. Players and spectators attending the subsequent game may not leave their cars until people from the first game have departed. Should the field be fully vacated prior to the second start time, the game may commence early subject to umpire availability.

Umpire positioning on the field has changed – page 8

Playoffs – no playoffs this season; scores and standings will be kept on D2 site

GENERAL

NUMBERS

- **Teams will be grouped into “leagues / bubbles” with a maximum of 50 players per bubble,** as prescribed by provincial requirements
- **Each team will keep an attendance tracker** (written or electronic scorecard may be used) for all baseball activities including all players and coaches. On request, the team will provide the league with a copy of the attendance tracker. This document may be provided to Ottawa Public Health for contact tracing if required.

SCREENING/DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19/RETURN FROM COVID-19

- **Self-screening** through <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/> is required by all participants, volunteers, and spectators prior to attending any game, practice, meeting or other in-person team activity and any individual shall not attend if they fail the screening protocol. **Any person who is sick or has any of the following symptoms may not attend nor participate: cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath, headache.**
- A person, who is identified as part of an at-risk group, but otherwise passes the screening questions is discouraged from participating in in-person baseball activities, but they are not considered to have failed the screening protocol.
- Any participant, volunteer or spectator diagnosed with COVID-19 or who has been in contact with any person having COVID-19 in the previous 14 days **MUST** not attend any game, practice, meeting or other in-person team activity and **MUST** notify their local public health authority.
- Any participant, volunteer or spectator diagnosed with COVID-19 must be cleared by appropriate medical authorities prior to attending any in-person baseball activity. Evidence of the clearance needs to be provided to the applicable league President and/or a LL District Administrator.

CLEANING/SANITIZATION

The following applies when ever the guidelines refer to cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, wiping or similar terms

- Teams will have soap and water or 70% (or higher) alcohol hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes (or acceptable option) readily available.
- **Players and coaches shall wash or sanitize their hands after each inning or at least every 30min.**
- **Teams and/or players will bring their own hand sanitizer and keep it in their equipment bag.**
- Each team will be expected to wipe off benches, gate handles or other high contact surfaces at the end of each game.

- If possible, general cleaning should be done with microfiber cloths
- Only adults shall perform cleaning/sanitization functions.
- Those not involved in the cleaning/sanitization shall stay a minimum of 2 metres away from the cleaning/sanitization activities.
- Cleaning/sanitization products will not be used by or stored within access of young children.
- Where this document requires the use of protective gloves, this shall mean rubber gloves and not batting gloves or baseball mitts.
- When it is necessary to share critical or limited equipment, increased attention should be paid to detailed cleaning of all equipment directly contacting the head and face (catcher's mask, helmets).
- When possible, allow as much time as possible for the wet surface to dry naturally (ideal 3 to 5 min)

IMPLEMENTATION OF SAFE PHYSICAL DISTANCE

- Maintain minimum of 2 metres distancing during physical activity, including warm-ups, pre-game and post-game activities, wherever possible.
- Use of dugouts is strictly limited to 1 coach and the "in the hole" batter
- Use as much space as required outside the dugout (but in safe areas outside of the field of play) to maintain adequate physical distance
- Avoid congestion at points of entry to the diamond (i.e. gates, dugout doors, etc.) to allow maintenance of 2 metres distancing among participants
- All spectators must follow the physical distancing rules as required/recommended by Ottawa Regional Public Health and ensure they observe areas required for players.

ESTABLISHMENT OF HYGIENE STANDARDS

- Sneeze and/or cough in a tissue or the internal crease of the elbow. Avoid contact of hands with personal respiratory point
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands
- All potentially infected waste (i.e. disposable tissues, PPE masks, protective gloves, etc.), hygiene material, rubbish, debris, etc., in all shared spaces (diamonds, dugouts etc.) shall be disposed of safely at the end of in-person baseball activity.
- **There will be no sharing of drinks or food (water bottle etc.)**
- **There will be no end of game snacks**

VENUES (FIELDS)

- Each team will provide cleaning/disinfecting materials for use by their team at every game.
- For games, both the home team and the visiting team are responsible for cleaning/sanitizing their dugouts, and any other items that may have been touched by team members before and after games

- Teams will designate someone to oversee safety protocols such as hand sanitizing and distancing. This can be a coach, or team safety manager.
- Scheduling of diamonds will allow for a minimum of 45 minutes between the conclusion of the prior event and the start of the subsequent event to allow for: (1) the participants involved in the prior event to clean/sanitize equipment, dispose of garbage from common areas, and have all team members vacate the facility BEFORE (2) participants involved in the subsequent event enter the facility and clean/sanitize common areas; without crossover between the those participating in the two events. Such games will have time limits.
- Washrooms are expected to be closed. BBQ/Snack Bars/Concessions/Canteens are prohibited from operating until the provincial limit on gatherings is at least 250 persons.
- Coaches will ensure thorough disinfection of common spaces before/after use including: dugouts benches, fence/gate latches, any other spaces that come into frequent touch
- Every effort should be made by managers/coaches to physically distance. If not possible, they should wear a cloth face mask. Dugouts are not to be used, however players transitioning to the plate – “in the hole” may stand in the dugout along with one coach.

SPECTATORS (PARENTS)

- Ensure physical distance of 2m between non-family participants and spectators
- **Spectators are encouraged to bring their own chairs for personal use** – bleachers will typically be closed for use and will not be disinfected.
- **Spectators will set up well away from players, and may be directed to specific areas by host leagues – cooperation is expected**
- **Spectators MAY NOT retrieve baseballs that leave the field of play** – defensive players will retrieve balls
- Spectators are encouraged not to wander to other areas of parks in which their diamond is located as other events are likely in progress.
- If a baseball event is interrupted by thunder, participants, volunteers, and spectators are to return to their motor vehicles until the baseball event is cancelled or able to resume. If someone does not have a motor vehicle; they should shelter in a safe location and try to maintain a minimum of 2 metres distancing from other.

EQUIPMENT

- No sharing of equipment such as batting helmets, catcher’s masks, or other equipment likely to have been exposed to respiratory droplets. Each player should have his/her own helmet, baseball gloves, batting gloves, etc. and store these items inside their personal bag when not in use.
- Avoid personal clothing, equipment or electronics etc. being left in common places. Store inside personal bag always.
- Equipment that must be shared must be cleaned/sanitized between player's use.

- If possible, each player should also have their own bat. If a player has their own bat, it cannot be shared with another player.
- Physical distancing is not possible 100% of the time. As such face coverings may be worn at the discretion of the participant (recommended that it not be white or grey)
- Players should not wear protective medical gloves on the field during game play.
- Rules of acceptable behaviour cannot be contravened.
- Equipment must be sanitized between users if it must be shared.

PARTICIPANTS

- No spitting
- No sunflower seeds or chewing gum
- No sharing of water bottles or food
- No shared coolers
- No handshakes, fist or chest bumps, high fives, hugs, kisses, etc

GAME PLAY

PRE - GAME

- The two teams may share the field for pre-game warm up. Teams are permitted to complete an infield practice before the game.
- Minimum physical distance of 2 metres at Home Plate meeting which is optional. Involvement is limited to 1 coach from each team; one or both umpires may be involved.
- Line up cards must be prepared but will not be physically shared - photos may be taken by scorekeepers etc. and the lineup card must be made available to show the umpire when requested.

DUGOUT/BENCH

- **Dugouts will not be used, other than by the “in the hole” batter who must be accompanied by one coach.** Physical distancing is required.
- **Players should come to the game with a lawn chair.** Each player will be given a designated area outside of the field of play for them to sit at when not in the game. All player equipment including their bat should be kept at this location. Coaches will supervise players in this area.

- **Player/Spectator Positioning**

- Ball diamonds vary in design; what works for player/spectator set up may work at one diamond but not all. Players must be set up where distancing can be accomplished. Field access is also a consideration. **Spectators must be WELL away from players.** Spectators views are a secondary consideration but usually spectators can be accommodated down the base lines well beyond the player area, or outside the outfield fences. Some diamonds may have enough room for spectators behind the backstop. Spectators are expected to follow direction from host league representatives or host team coaches.

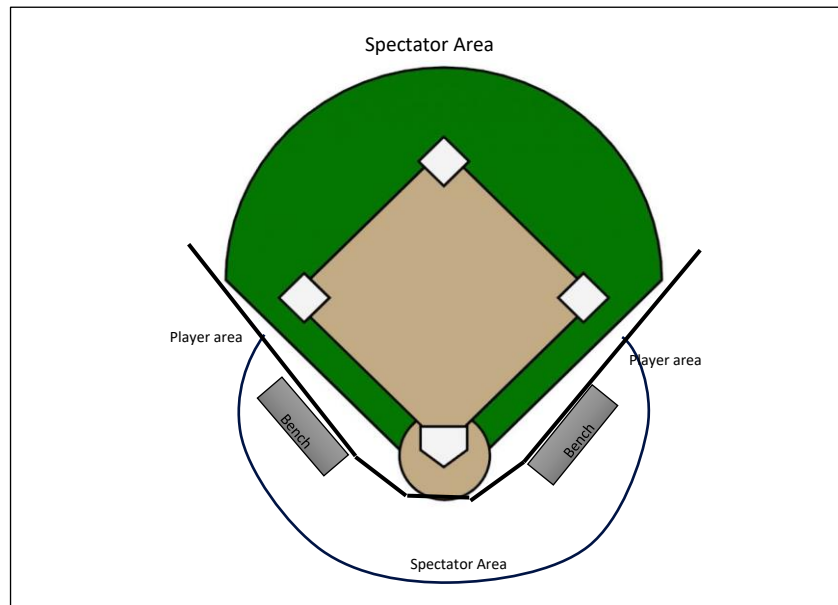


Figure 1: Recommended Player area. Spectator should avoid areas around dugouts and backstop.

BASEBALLS

- Each team will have a coach or safety manager designated to handle the baseballs.
- Each team will use their own game balls when playing defense. They will take their baseballs on the field and then bring them back to the dugout when they leave the field.
- The defensive team will maintain in control of the game balls used while they are on defense.
- Defensive team will need to chase all foul balls while they are in the field.
- Spectators MAY NOT touch baseballs that leave the field of play.
- If a ball leaves play it shall be returned to the designated coach or safety manager. Another ball can be thrown into play by the defensive team.

BATS

- Ideally every player would have their own personal bat. If this is not possible or realistic, designated team bats may be used. Personal bats will not be shared by anyone else throughout the game.
- If a player does not have their own bat, they will use one of the team bats that will be disinfected after every use.
- If a batter does NOT get on base, they will retrieve their bat and bring it back to their designated area (lawn chair).
- If a batter DOES reach base and is therefore not able to retrieve his/her own bat, a coach or safety manager shall pick-up the bat wearing protective gloves and sanitize.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

- Each team will designate two players to catch per game and provide two sets of catcher's equipment. Catcher's equipment will be thoroughly sanitized after the game.
- In the event one of the catchers is unavailable due to injury, the equipment may be sanitized in-game for an alternate player
- Pitch count rules are still in effect.
- No sharing of catcher's masks in pitcher pre-game warm-up, between innings or in the bullpen. If one of the designated catchers is not available, warm up pitches may be thrown to a player or coach who is standing, but not squatting.
- If a face covering is worn by the pitcher it will be assessed as per existing rules regarding distracting colours. It is recommended that it not be white or grey.
- A safety base may be used at first base. It is not mandatory.

UMPIRES

- Umpire positioning
 - The ball/strike umpire will work 2 metres behind the pitcher. This makes umpire equipment unnecessary. The second umpire will be positioned as normal behind first base and move as necessary to make calls. The second umpire may instead be positioned in foul territory between home and first base, moving as necessary to call foul balls down the lines, plays at bases and home plate. Umpires may wear face coverings at their discretion.
- Umpire(s) will not hold game balls.
- If incidental contact with baseballs or equipment occurs, umpires shall sanitize their hands.
- Umpires are responsible for the safety of all participants during game action and may intervene to ensure proper safe game play; they are not responsible to oversee sanitizing or related protocols

IN - GAME CHANGES

- Players shall not lick their fingers, blow on their hands, or otherwise go to their mouth.

- To maintain physical distancing between fielders and base runners; **leadoffs are prohibited. (no holding runners)**
- **For major and below, stealing is not permitted. The runner may leave the base once the ball is hit. Runners who leave early will be sent back to their original bag.**
- **For JR and above, stealing is allowed. The runner may leave the base once the ball leaves the pitchers hand. Runners who leave early will be sent back to their original bag.**
- Tag plays are allowed, but the defensive player should vacate the area as soon as reasonably practicable following the tag.
- **No advancing from third to home on wild pitch/passed ball**
- **Mound visits by coach are allowed** – please limit when possible; the coach must wear a mask if physical distancing cannot be maintained
- No mound visits by catcher
- Tagging is allowed however it should be done with the glove hand to minimize contact.

POST-GAME

- No hand shaking after the game. It is encouraged to acknowledge the opposing team by hat tipping or other similar gestures.
- Post game discussions with the players and coaching staff should be brief and must be done only with proper physical distancing measures in place.

COACHES

- Team meetings, including pitching visits, shall maintain physical distance of minimum 2 metres.
- A maximum of 1 person (coach or player) and the pitcher may be included in a pitching visit.
- **All coaches must have access to a face covering and be prepared to wear if physical distance rules can not be maintained. Coaches may use their own.**
- If a coach must approach an umpire, physical distancing of at least 2 metres must be maintained. Failure to do so may result in ejection.
- While on offence, base coaches must always stay within their box, except to avoid a play being made in the coach's box. Any discussions between coaches and players (e.g. batter visiting 3rd base coach; coach talking to runners, etc.) must maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres.
- Pitchers, catchers, spotters, and coaches must always maintain a physical distance of 2 metres while pitchers are warming up in the bullpen.

INJURIES

- The player parent in attendance shall be allowed to attend the player directly and will be responsible for directing care once the player has been removed from play
- Coaches attending an injured player SHALL wear a face covering
- Critical injuries (head injuries, breathing, bones, blood) shall be dealt with as an emergency medical situation.