Rookie Interlock Rules

Updated 2024

Supplemental rules to Little League Rule Book

These rules supersede local association house league rules.

Player development is the focus of Rookie baseball. INTERLOCK rules require that all teams regardless of tier adhere to fair play rules, including during playoffs.

Please take note of the following rules which are new or being emphasized in Interlock play:

2.1 Adult Game Coordinator (LL(rule 9.03(d))

3.1 Fair Play Rule

3.11 Throwing Bat Rule

Section 1 Interlock League

1.0 Organization

Local Little Leagues may not always have enough players to play only within their own league, particularly in summer months. Therefore, it's necessary to establish an "INTERLOCK SCHEDULE" in which teams play against teams from other associations primarily within District 2 and District 6.

Since each participating League's House Rules may be a little different, the leagues have agreed to the following common rules to govern INTERLOCK PLAY.

1.2 Interlock Administration

1.2.1 District Administrators

Interlock play is run by the "Interlock Board", which consists of the District Administrators (D.A.s) for the Districts involved in Interlock play. The board will occasionally request advice and/or consensus from the Presidents of the Leagues involved in Interlock play.

1.3 Sportsmanship

Play Nicely: Every adult involved in a Little League game is a volunteer (coaches, umpires, scorekeepers, conveners, DA, ADA's, etc.) and all are contributing their time so that kids can have the experience of playing baseball. Keep it friendly. Think twice before you accuse someone of bias. It is in the best interest of everyone involved to be cooperative with each other.

1.4 Divisions and Age Alignment

Rookie Summer Interlock has two tiers to accommodate different levels of skill-- Canadian tier ("A") and National tier ("B"). Six-year-olds MUST be registered in the National tier.

1.5 Schedules and Standings

Every effort will be made to allow teams to have an equal number of home and away games during the season, and, if possible, one home and one away game per week. The official standings will be kept by the convener on the D2 Website. There is no allowance in the standings if teams may have played a different number of games.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the standings appearing on the website are correct. Standings are calculated as follows:

- Three points (3) will be awarded for a win (including a win by forfeit).
- Two points (2) will be awarded for a tie.
- One point (1) will be awarded for a loss.
- No points (0) will be awarded for a loss by forfeit.

Notes:

- *Games cancelled for any reason other than rain shall be forfeits, including games not played because of a team's inability to field at least 8 players. A forfeit will result in a score of 6 – 0 being awarded with no points being awarded to the forfeiting (losing) team.*

- *There is no allowance in the standings for the fact that teams may have played different numbers of games.*

1.6 Protest, Ejections, and other Incidents

All efforts should be made to avoid protests. Every Protest, Ejection and other Incident must be reported to the INTERLOCK Board (through the appropriate DA) the same evening it happens, and certainly before the team's next scheduled game. The umpire of the game, a coach, and/or any other interested party, making the protest, reporting an ejection, or providing witness to an incident, should separately report this to the INTERLOCK Board (through the appropriate DA) by submitting an Incident Report via the form provided on the District 2 web site, http://d2llontario.ca. The online form will automatically e-mail the Incident Report to the INTERLOCK Board, the District Umpire Consultant(s) may also receive the Incident Report through the system.

1.3 Team, Player, and Call-Up Eligibility

1.3.1 Team Eligibility

Any league in Districts 2 and 6 can enter one or more teams into each division in the Summer INTERLOCK leagues. Teams from Districts 7 and 8 will be considered for entry into INTERLOCK play on a case-by-case basis. Each team must have AT LEAST ONE person, identified to the INTERLOCK League, who can receive email any day of the week and be responsible for communicating information distributed that way to the rest of the team.

1.3.1(a) Team Size:

Minimum Roster: 12 player minimum roster size is required to prevent forfeits; exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the DA(s).
Maximum Roster: 18 players is the maximum roster size.

1.3.1(b) Division Restrictions:

Leagues with one (1) team in a division: A League that enters only one team in a division, MUST enter that team into the Canadians ("A") tier.
Leagues with more than one (1) team in a division: A League that enters more than one team in a division, MUST enter at least one team in the Canadians ("A") tier. It will be the League's option to make equal teams and enter them in Canadians ("A") tier, or to select the teams according to skill level or age and enter at least one in Canadians ("A") tier and the remainder in the Nationals ("B") tier.

1.3.2 Player Eligibility

Players must have participated in their association's Rookie (coach pitch) spring league.

Eligible players are league age 6, 7 and 8 (as of August 31st of the current year). 6-year-olds must play in the National tier. Exceptions require approval from the District Administrator and are to be submitted in writing to the district convenor.

Interlock requires that player details be entered into the team rosters no later than July 15 by each team's manager using the Roster Entry form at the D2 website, http://d2llontario.ca.

1.3.3 Call-Ups

Little League permits call-ups as per LL Regulation V(c). Call-ups within INTERLOCK are specifically allowed only to be used to prevent forfeits; call-ups are not to be used for a strategic advantage to the team or for the benefit of the player's development. INTERLOCK call-up rules are as follows:

a) Rookie Canadians ("A") calls-up players from Nationals ("B").
b) Call-ups must be a regular rostered INTERLOCK player.
c) Call-ups may only be used to bring the game day lineup to a maximum of 10 players.
d) Nationals may call-over if a second national team exists. Canadians may call-over ONLY when there are NO call-up options from Nationals.
e) A manager using one or more call-ups must identify those call-ups to the opposing manager prior to the start of the game.
f) Leagues may establish a taxi-squad composed of registered spring players not rostered in summer interlock who are capable, and willing to play if needed. This is especially helpful for a National team who has no call-over options, and no call-up options. Call-ups from T-Ball are not permitted.
g) Players may only be called up if it does not interfere with their own team schedule and the team coach approves the call-up.
h) The INTERLOCK restricts a specific individual player from being called up more than five (5) times during an INTERLOCK. Managers and Convenors are to ensure that call-ups are spread amongst available and willing players.
i) Call-downs are prohibited.

Section Two-- Pre-Game and Starting Game Rules

2.1 Home Team Responsibilities

The Home team is responsible for:

- The home team will make every effort to schedule a qualified plate umpire for Canadian division games, and if available for the National division. If unavailable, a home team parent will fill the role. The home team supplies the base umpire if a qualified base umpire is not available. The visiting team parents can also fill the base umpire role.
- Arrange for an Adult Game Coordinator if there is no umpire aged 18 years or older on the field. (rule 9.03(d))
- Setting up the field as follows:

  Bases will be 60 feet apart. First base: Canadian: standard bag; National: safety base (LL Rule 7.15)

The pitching distance will be at least 35 feet from home plate. No coach or "fielding pitcher" may be closer at the time of the pitch. Pitches may be delivered by a coach pitcher or a manual pitching machine. Coach pitchers will pitch overhand. Underhand pitching is not permitted.

To assist adult pitchers, a line will be drawn with chalk or in the dirt at the pitcher's position 35 feet from home plate. The adult pitcher must have one foot on or behind the line at the time the pitch is released. If an adult pitcher is unable to adhere to the 35-foot line repeatedly, they must be replaced.

- Supplying at least two (2) new approved leather game balls for the level of play and to have additional spare approved game balls available if needed.

- The home team will provide the **OFFICIAL SCORER**. Both teams shall track their own scores and report them to the web site (see rule 4.6 in Section 4 below). Scorekeepers should confer during the game, but in case of an irresolvable difference, the home team's scorekeeper will prevail.

- Home teams must use the 3rd base dugout for their home games.

2.2 Pitching machines

Teams may use a pitching machine instead of coach pitchers. The machine will be positioned not closer than 35' from home plate. The maximum speed allowed is 40mph and the minimum is 35mph. If desired, one team may use a pitching machine while the other team can use coach pitch.

2.3 Rainouts and Rescheduled Games

Rained out games or games not played as scheduled are to be made up as soon as conveniently possible to the two teams. The head coach or manager of the home team (with assistance from the convenor if needed) will take the lead in corresponding with the visiting team to reschedule a rained-out game, preferably within one week. (All games must be completed by the recognized regular season end date). If agreement cannot be reached by the coaches and the convener on the time and location, the DA is to be notified by the teams involved and the DA will decide accordingly.
DO NOT ask another team to reschedule a game because your team cannot field a full team.

2.4 Game Start Times

All games are scheduled to begin promptly at the time indicated on the schedule. Typical start times are 6:00pm without lights but there may be other start times as well. Fifteen minutes grace should be allowed for the arrival of late players. (More time may be granted at the umpires' and opposing team's discretion).

2.5 Line-Up Size

INTERLOCK adopts the policy of continuous batting order; therefore, each player present at the game will be in the batting order.

There can be 10 players in the defensive line-up, minimum of 8. The tenth player will be an outfield rover. Less than 8 players present results in a game forfeiture.

Any player who comes late to the game may be added to the bottom of the batting order, including continuation games. *(LL Rule 4.04)*

When a player is injured, becomes ill, or must leave the game site after the start of the game, the team will skip over them when their time at bat comes up without penalty. (i.e. There is *no* automatic out *(LL Rule 4.04 Note 3 Option)*. If the injured, ill, or absent player returns they are merely inserted into their original spot in the batting order and the game continues.

If, during the game, an injury or any other reason causes the number of available players to fall to or below 8 players, the remaining players may choose to continue to play the game and the game will not be considered a forfeiture.

Section Three-- Game Play Rules

3.1 Fair play rule

Players must share equally infield and outfield positions. This does not mean that there is a 50-50 rule for infield and outfield. There are six infield and three outfield positions. All players' defensive play must be two-thirds infield and one-third outfield over the innings that they are not sitting. All players will share equally in sitting out.

The only exception to the fair play rules is for skill positions (pitcher guard, 1st base, catcher) where a player's safety may be jeopardized. Every effort must be made to help the player develop the skills required to play those positions during practice and then in games. Such players must still be given two-thirds of their play in the other infield positions.

Fielding:

3.2 Catchers will always wear full protective gear.

3.3 The pitcher guard will wear a helmet. It is recommended that all players wear a jock/jill.

3.4 A registered coach is required to ALWAYS be in the dugout with players. Two defensive coaches may be on the field but must remain in the outfield.

3.5 Outfielders, including the rover, must be at least 2 feet behind the baselines on the outfield grass when the pitch is delivered.

3.6 The infield fly rule is not in effect.

3.7 Fair territory begins at the plate. There is no minimum distance for a hit to be considered fair.

Batting:

3.8 There is NO on-deck circle. Players next up to bat will remain behind the fence or in the dugout. They will wear a helmet, and MAY NOT pick up a bat until they are the batter.

3.9 Players are allowed 5 pitches or 3 swinging strikes, whichever comes first. A batter may have more than 5 pitches if the last pitch is fouled off.

3.10 For each batter, the adult pitcher will be given 5 baseballs at the start of each at-bat. The catcher will merely collect balls during the at-bat, returning them to the pitcher for the start of the next at-bat.

3.11 NEW RULE: One warning shall be given if a player throws a bat. On the second offense (same game), the player is called out for that at bat. Further, the ball is dead and runners do not advance. The result of the thrown bat is equivalent to a strikeout. A bat is considered "thrown" if it hits the catcher, back-stop and/or is seen as dangerous to others. This rule requires judgment on the part of the umpire, who may be a parent. Given the importance of safety and the goal to reinforce a needed change in the skills of the batter, it is hoped that any umpire including a parent can apply this rule as intended. It's hoped this rule will not be necessary often especially in summer ball when players should have learned this in spring. The addition of this rule is intended to impact serious situations where others could be injured.

3.12 If a batted ball touches the adult pitcher or pitching machine, the ball is dead, and it does not count as a pitch or strike. The count remains as it was before the play.

3.13 There are no walks.
3.14 Bunting is not permitted.

Running:

3.15 Sliding into first base is an automatic out.
3.16 There is no leading off or stealing. Runners can only leave their bases when the bat hits the ball, leaving before contact will be considered an out for the base runner.

3.17 ADVANCING ON A HIT BALL

When a ball is hit into the outfield (reaching grass or first touched by an outfielder), runners may advance. Once the ball is in possession of any infielder who is in the infield, runners can only advance to the base they are going to at the time the infielder gets possession.

3.18 ADVANCING ON OVERTHROWS

In the Canadian Division runners may advance a maximum of one base on any throwing error. There may be only one per play. For example, if there was an overthrow at first base followed by an overthrow at second base, only the overthrow at first base allows runners to advance. After the second overthrow, the ball is dead, and runners do not advance further. The batter/runner will stay at second**.**

In the National Division runners may not advance on a throwing error.

Section 4 – Managing The Game

4.1 Games will be at most six innings long. No new inning may start two hours after the **scheduled** start time of the game.

4.2 If one team is up by 10 runs at the end of 4 innings, the game will end. Teams can complete the game for practice, but the 4th inning score will count.

4.3 Scoring is capped at 5 runs in innings 1 through 6. There is no unlimited scoring in the final inning.

4.4 During regular season games ties are permitted.

4.5 If unable to complete an inning for any reason (ie: weather, darkness) the score reverts to the previous completed inning (Little League Rules 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12).

4.6 If thunder is heard or lightning is seen – the game **MUST** be delayed for a minimum of 30 mins, it is a running delay of 30 minutes that is reset after each thunder or lightning event. Adhering to this rule is critical

and may not be disregarded by anyone. Coaches and parents will abide by the decisions of umpires. All involved will err on the side of caution to keep everyone safe. **A baseball game is not as important as a life.**

Section Five-- Playoffs

5.1 Playoff games will be scheduled by the convener in consultation with the coaches. It is understood that the games will be played at the earliest time that a field is available, but, unless unavoidable, teams will not be required to play more than two INTERLOCK League play-off games in a week. Playoff games will sometimes be scheduled on Sundays and Fridays, even if there were no Sunday or Friday games during the regular season.

5.2 The team with the higher place finish in the regular season will be the home team for any play-off game.

5.3 All play-off games are sudden victory. Extra innings must be played if the game ends in a tie. Tied games cut short by darkness, curfew or rain must be continued as soon as possible. Teams involved must retain scorebooks, lineups and make note of the exact situation (runners on base etc) when the game stops so that when the game resumes it can start with all the same factors in place.

5.4 The curfew or time limit does NOT apply to the INTERLOCK play-off games, which must be played through to completion and a winner is determined. However, playoff games may still end 'early' if called by the umpire on account of darkness or weather, or if a scheduled game is following the playoff game. Games may be scheduled to start at 5:30pm. Teams are encouraged to play efficiently (not waste time unnecessarily) in order to complete the game.

5.5 Trophies or medals will be provided for Championship and Finalist team players. The Summer Interlock board will order the awards and provide them to the convenor.

INTERLOCK Rookie Rules: Schedule A – Divisional Aide-Memoire / Quick Reference Chart

	Canadian	**National**	
Player Ages	League ages 7,8	League age 6,7,8	
	Coach pitch or pitching machine	Coach pitch	
Baseballs	Hard ball	Soft safety baseball	
	45cc or equivalent	TVB or equivalent	
Bases	Standard	Safety base	
Curfew	No new inning will start 2 hours after the scheduled start time	No new inning will start 2 hours after the scheduled start time	
Stealing after ball crosses plate	No	No	
Bunting	No	No	
Max # of innings per game	6	6	
Walks	No	No	
Advancing on overthrows	One base only	No	
Maximum Runs	Max 5 per inning 10 run lead after 4 compete innings (4½ if home team is leading	Max 5 per inning 10 run lead after 4 compete innings (4½ if home team is leading	
On Deck Batters	No	No	
Infield Fly Rule	No	No	
Batter Can Advance on Dropped Third Strike	No	No	