

# Fort Des Moines Little League Ground Rules

Updated March 2025

Any rules not covered by Fort Des Moines Little League (FDMLL) ground rules are directly governed by the Little League Rule Book App.

## **Little League Baseball Objectives**

The objective of the local league shall be to implant firmly in the youth of the community the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, and courage. This will help them become well-adjusted, stronger and happier children. This will also help them grow to be decent, healthy, and trustworthy adults.

Directors, Officers, and Members (managers, coaches, and parents) shall bear in mind that stressing exceptional athletic skills or winning games is secondary, and that leadership through the examples listed above is the primary goal.

## **Payment of Fees**

Cases of parents who are unable to pay entry fees for their child to play at FDM may apply for financial aid and it will be reviewed individually by the Executive Board. They will determine if the player will be eligible to participate in post-season tournaments representing FDMLL.

## **Tobacco, Alcohol, Controlled Substances**

In compliance with the Iowa Smokefree Air Act and at the recommendations of Little League International there shall be no tobacco, including but not limited to: cigarettes, chewing tobacco, electronic cigarettes, vapor; alcohol, or controlled substance anywhere in the complex of Fort Des Moines Little League.

## **Pets**

No pets are allowed on the FDMLL property, with the exception of certified service animals. Certified service animals should have a special collar, harness, vest, emblem or other means of identifying it as such.

## **FDMLL Conduct**

The purpose of this section is to communicate the expectation of this league in regard to conduct related to Little League Baseball Activities. The rules of good conduct include good sportsmanship, fair play, and obeying other rules as indicated by this section or the actual rules of Little League Baseball. This section applies to any member, or non-member who is on the premises or those premises used by FDMLL. These rules are to be enforced year-round. This section expressly establishes the exact penalties for specific levels of conduct deemed unacceptable by the governing body of FDMLL and Little League Baseball. Any conduct covered in this section will fall into the category of unsportsmanlike conduct. All board members have the authority to enforce all rules at any time on FDMLL premises or any premises used by FDMLL.

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Fort Des Moines Little League has a zero-tolerance policy for unsportsmanlike conduct on part of the coaches, players and spectators. All reported incidents regarding unsportsmanlike conduct will be reviewed by the Executive Board and League Commissioner associated with the reported incident. All parties involved will be contacted by a member(s) of the executive board to gather more details on the incident. They will then review the incident and decide whether the event falls into one of the three disciplinary levels below:

- A.** Unsportsmanlike conduct with no physical contact includes but is not limited to the following: use of profanity, questioning subjective umpire calls such as balls/strikes, and repeated offenses of coaching rules discussed in the handbook & ground rules.

Penalties:

- If an incident involves an ejection from a game, the offender shall immediately be ejected from the ballpark for the duration of the day.
- The offender shall not be allowed to return to the ballpark up to the start of the second-scheduled game played by the team the offender is affiliated with as a coach, player, or spectator, subject to the discretion of the Executive Board.
- If that game is rained out the penalty will be enforced during the next played game.

- B.** Unsportsmanlike conduct involving slight physical contact. Includes, but not limited to: light pushing; shoving; or bumping.

Penalties:

- The offender shall immediately be ejected from the ballpark for the duration of the day.
- The offender shall not be allowed to return to the ballpark up to the start of the 6<sup>th</sup> scheduled game played by the team the offender is affiliated with as a coach, player or spectator, subject to the discretion of the Executive Board.
- If that game is rained out the penalty will be enforced during the next played game.

- C.** Unsportsmanlike conduct involving physical contact or threat of harm to any person, or the family or property of that person.

Penalties:

- The offender shall immediately be ejected from the ballpark for the duration of the day.

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- The offender shall be subject to up to a one-year suspension, subject to the discretion of the Executive Board.

Repeat violations of our policy: A second level A offense results in level B penalties; a second level B offense will result in level C penalties.

Any person ejected from the ballpark shall have the opportunity to be heard and able to plead their case if so desired. The request for hearing must be in writing and presented to the President of the league within 24 hours from the time of misconduct. A special board meeting may be called by the President and shall be held within 48 hours of receipt of the written request.

## **Umpire Rule 9:01**

1. The umpire shall be responsible for the conduct of the game in accordance with official rules for maintaining discipline and order the playing field during the game.
2. The umpire is authorized to order any person to do or refrain from doing, anything that affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce the prescribed penalties.
3. The umpire has the authority to rule on any point not specifically covered in these rules.
4. The umpire has the authority at their discretion to eject any person from the playing field area.

## **Local Amendment to Rule 9:01**

1. The umpire has the authority to eject any person from the park with the assistance of the Officer of the Day on duty.
2. If the ejected party refuses to leave the park, the Officer of the Day or League Officer will contact Warren County Sheriff's Department to assist with removal.

## **Officer of the Day**

This person shall have the complete authority and responsibility to enforce the rules of the league and shall have the authority to eject any person displaying unsportsmanlike conduct within the premises and immediate vicinity of FDMLL.

**General Ground Rules** (see also Division specific ground rules for clarification of rules of play for a particular age group or division).

## **(A) Mandatory play**

T-Ball through Rookie: Entire roster is in the batting order.

Minor through Seniors: Entire roster is in the batting order every player on every team roster must participate in 6 defensive outs if a full game is played.

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The above rule applies to those players present at the start of the scheduled game only. A player arriving after the start of the game must bat last in the lineup. These rules do not apply if an injury or illness prevents a player from participating. The manager shall inform the opposing manager and official scorekeeper of any such player changes on his roster.

The commissioner must be notified by the manager if a player is absent (unexcused) for a continuous time period of 2 practice weeks or 3 games. The Commissioner will follow up with the player's parents if necessary. This is important because it could affect All Star eligibility  
Penalty: One game suspension for the manager.

The following penalties shall apply for violation of the mandatory play rules listed above.

- First violation: Any player not meeting the requirements of this section must play in every inning of the next scheduled game
- Second violation: Any player not meeting the requirements of this section must play in every inning of the next 2 scheduled games.
- Third violation: The manager shall be relieved of all managerial and coaching responsibilities for the remainder of the season. This requires board approval.

## **(B) Player Discipline**

The manager must notify the Board of Directors, and the player's parents, in writing 24 hours prior to a game a player is being withheld from for disciplinary reasons. Failure to do so will result in suspension of the manager.

The manager must notify the opposing manager, and the official scorekeeper before the start of the game of any player being withheld for disciplinary reasons. This player is then ineligible for the duration of that game, and must be present at the game, in uniform, in the dugout. Failure to be present will result in suspension of the player for the next game.

Any player suspended on the request of the manager/coach shall begin serving that suspension immediately. The suspension shall be for consecutive games as determined by the Board. The manager does not have the right to determine when and if the player will serve the suspension. Any violation of this rule may lead to the manager's suspension of the same length of time

## **(C) Team Sportsmanship**

The manager is responsible for keeping the game under control. No swearing or unruly actions from the manager, coaches, players, umpires, or spectators will be tolerated.

Managers will control the conversation of his or her players toward the other team in a sportsmanlike manner.

No derogatory chanting etc. will be allowed.

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No direct gesturing (ex. clapping on the bases, etc.) or yelling intended to distract the pitcher or batter will be tolerated.

Managers must keep players in the dugout.

Only the manager shall represent the team in communication with the umpire and the opposing manager.

The manager shall always be responsible for the conduct of their team in observance of official rules and communication with the umpire (this shall include spectators from or representing the team).

## **(D) Game/Field Preparation**

Teams in the Minor through Senior divisions will document their game results and pitch counts after each game by turning in pitching logs/score sheets to the box in the equipment room.

Home teams shall make sure the field is marked and bases are set.

Game balls to be provided to the umpire by the home team.

The home team that has the last game of the day on their specified field shall make sure that all equipment is returned to the proper place and scoreboards are shut off.

Home team is responsible for raking the mound, home plate, and baselines after each game.

Home Team empties the trash can(s) for their field after EACH game.

Each team must clean their dugout and spectator area after each game.

All equipment not being used must be kept in the dugout or equipment sheds.

Failure to comply with the above rules will result in a one game suspension for the manager per occurrence. It shall be the Officer of the Day's responsibility to notify the commissioner of this occurrence and he/she will contact the manager.

## **(E) Hot/Cold Weather Policy**

The safety of our members is of the utmost importance to Fort Des Moines Little League. The following policy has been put in place for the safety of the players and so that there is consistency on whether or not a game starts on any given day of the season.

Heat index/Feels like Temperature	Policy
Below 35°F	Games will be delayed or postponed
36°F - 94°F	Normal Activities

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95°F – 104°F	FDMLL will provide water for players and spectators. Coaches and umpires should closely monitor players for heat exhaustion symptoms. Encourage players to drink water in the days leading up to and during games.
Above 105°F	Games will be delayed or postponed

\*Temperatures reported by the Weather Channel app

## **(F) Inclement Weather and Darkness**

Only the plate umpire or Officer of the Day may call a game prior to the start of the game due to field conditions. This may apply to inclement weather delay. Umpires must notify the Officer of the Day of this decision.

The Officer of the Day in accordance with the official umpire shall be the only person(s) to call games in progress due to inclement weather.

For Minor, Major, and Junior/Senior divisions the discretion is up to the umpire to call the game for darkness.

For Bam Bam, T-Ball and Rookie divisions the Officer of the Day will make the decision as to when to call the game for darkness.

Games in progress, delayed longer than 20 minutes by the Officer of the Day (due to inclement weather) that are not considered regulation games can be declared a rainout.

The League will reschedule the rainout games. The scheduler will try to schedule these games on the first open date of play.

Only extenuating circumstances may exempt this rule and must be approved by the FDMLL Board.

## **(G) Field Days**

All teams are required to work the park on designated field days. This applies to all coaches and managers. Make sure to sign in and out at each field day you participate in.

The penalty for failure to work will result in equipment held back and no practice time on any FDMLL fields.

## **(H) Volunteers During Games**

Each team may have no more than three (3) adults on the field during defense and offense. A 4<sup>th</sup> adult should be in the dugout at all times.

All coaches and managers must be adults of 18 years of age or older. Applications and background checks must be approved and on file for these volunteers. In compliance with District 5 rules, all volunteers must complete the USA Abuse Training Course and turn in their completed certificate to [fdmlittleleague@gmail.com](mailto:fdmlittleleague@gmail.com).

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Managers and coaches must stay in these areas:

1. The coach's box on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
2. Area consisting of a perpendicular line from each corner of the dugout to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line respectively.

Penalty for violation of this rule shall be as follows:

1. 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Manager or Coach shall be warned once
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Result in ejection from the game and will require appearance before FDMLL board.

## **(I) Helmets**

Each offensive player will wear helmets while on the field in games or tournaments.

Players **9 years** and younger must wear helmets with face masks. This is mandatory.

Individuals may use their own helmet as long as they are Little League approved baseball helmets.

## **(J) Games Scheduling**

No teams may play more than three (3) consecutive games in one week, or more than 4 games total in one calendar week.

## **(K) Pregame Warm up**

Maximum required warm-up time on the field is 15 minutes, 10 minutes if the game is behind schedule. Home team shall not be penalized if the visiting team is late.

## **(L) League Champions**

League Champions will be determined by the following criteria:

Senior, Major, Minor:

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Best League Record

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Next Best League Record

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Next Best League Record (Participation Award)

4<sup>th</sup> Place (and on): Next Best League Record (Participation Award)

Rookie, T-Ball, and Bam Bam shall receive a participation award.

## **(M) Forfeits**

Forfeitures are governed on a case by case basis by the executive board in conjunction with the division commissioner.

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Monetary penalties could be enforced to cover the cost of umpires

## **(N) External Teams**

Teams that are formed for purposes other than play sponsored by Fort Des Moines Little League will not be able to use Fort Des Moines Little League or FDMLL as part of their team's name.

## **(O) Player Substitution**

A team short player(s) may borrow a player(s) from another FDMLL team of the same age division. That player must bat last in order and play in the outfield position. They may not pitch. Games may start with 8 players but must take an out when batting for the 9<sup>th</sup> Player (Major and Senior Division). Upon arrival, a qualified 9<sup>th</sup> player may enter the game immediately and fill the 9<sup>th</sup> spot.

## **(P) Cell Phones**

No cell phones shall be used on the ball field during game play, except when using a game management app such as Game Changer.

## **(Q) Spectators**

This is a person on the premise of the legal boundaries of FDMLL, and those premises used by FDMLL.

## **(R) Background Checks**

No person shall be allowed on the field or in the dugouts during game play without a background check. All practice volunteers shall also complete the volunteer application if they will be assisting on any occasion with regular contact with players. (Exception: Parent tending to an injured player). All volunteers must complete the Little League Abuse Training Course and turn in their certificate to [fdmlittleleague@gmail.com](mailto:fdmlittleleague@gmail.com). The commissioner of each league will keep a list of authorized individuals. The penalties for violating this rule will affect both the manager and coach of the offending team:

1. 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Verbal warning by the Officer of the Day
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Written warning by the Umpire in Chief.
3. 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Five (5) game suspension

## **(S) Playing Rule Disputes**

No appeals or protests may be made regarding a judgment call. The first line of appeal is with the Office of the Day (OD); the OD will make the immediate decision regarding the play in question. This appeal must be made before the next pitch. If the manager does not agree with the OD's decision, they may protest the game by notifying the umpire and OD of their intent to do so. This announcement must be made before the next pitch. The game shall resume immediately following the decision of the OD. If the manager refuses to play, they may be



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ejected and/or the game be forfeited. See current Little League Rulebook about protesting the game.

If the decision of the OD is still in question following the completion of the game the coach or manager of the team shall contact the Commissioner for his/her league for further guidance. Under NO circumstances shall the manager or coach call any board member looking to overturn the decision of the OD.

Any violation of these or any rule without specific penalty will be presented to the Board for disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis.

All Protests & Complaints must be in writing and given to the division commissioner 24 hours after the completion of the game in question. The issue must be presented to the Rules Committee for action. If the Rules Committee cannot resolve the issue, a Special Board Meeting will be called for action.

Managers & Coaches must keep in mind that the main idea of Little League is to teach kids the fundamentals of baseball, such as throwing, catching, fielding, and playing the bases. All of this is important but teaching kids Good Sportsmanship and Good Team Spirit is also important.

## **(T)Last Batter Rule**

When the offensive team bats through its lineup and the last batter is up to bat this batter must put the ball in play or strikeout. If the last batter is hit by a pitch, he/she will advance to first and the next batter becomes the “last” batter.

The hit by pitch portion of this rule supersedes any other last batter rules.

If there are two outs and the last batter is up. The last out can be made by force or tag of any runner or the ball can be thrown to home once a defensive player has control of the ball and has touched home, the inning is over.

If less than two outs, the ball must be thrown home to end the inning.

## **(U)Slide at Home Rule 7.08 (a)(3)**

For T-ball through Senior League any runner is out when the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag; or A.R. – There is no “must slide rule.”

Note: This play will be strictly enforced because it is a matter of safety to the players.

## **Division Specific Ground Rules**

### **Bam Bam – 3 & 4 year olds**

1. Game Length: No new inning may start after 45 minutes or 3 innings whichever comes first.

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2. Entire roster bats each inning.
3. All players in the field are divided to play pitcher, catcher, or 1<sup>st</sup> base.
4. Front player in line fields the batted ball and runs it back to the tee and places the ball on the tee. At that time the players fielding turn is over and they go to the back of the line.
5. Batters hit a foam ball off the tee with a plastic/foam bat and runs to first base. Base runners can advance only 1 base per batter until the last batter hits and clears the bases and advances home. At that time the batting team turns at bat over for that inning.

## **T-Ball – 5 & 6 year olds**

1. Game Length: No new inning may start after 45 minutes or 3 innings whichever comes first. Also, at 60 minutes, the game is over, no matter where you are at in the game/lineup.
2. When a player is called out, they must leave the field of play and return to the dugout.
3. All players play the field. Only infielders can play infield all outfielders must play in the outfield.
4. You must rotate players from infield to outfield every inning. No player may play the same position in a game.
5. No score is kept.
6. Pitcher must be in the pitching circle until the ball is hit.
7. An 8-foot radius measured from the point of home plate will be chalked from the first base foul line to the 3rd base foul line. A hit ball must pass this line, or it will be called a foul ball and the batter will hit again.
8. Play stops once the pitcher has control of the ball and in the pitching circle.
9. Runners who have advanced past the halfway chalk line in the base path when play is stopped by the umpire will be awarded the base they are advancing to. Runners who have not reached the halfway mark will need to be placed at the base they came from.
10. When the last batter hits, the play must be stopped by having a defensive player touch home plate while having possession of the ball before the last batter reaches home plate. When this occurs, the play stops, and the inning is completed.
11. Every Player bats in the first 2 innings. In the 3rd inning the inning ends when 3 outs are made or every player bats, whichever comes first.

## **Rookie Division– 7 year old**

1. Game Length: 6 innings or no new inning will start after 1 hour and 30 minutes of play. Time limit constitutes a game, but you must finish the inning.
2. No score is kept.
3. All players play the field. Only infielders can play infield and all outfielders must play in the outfield.
4. All players will play at least two innings of infield per game in a full game.
5. Entire roster is in batting order.

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6. Coaches will pitch to the batters in this division. Each batter will get 10 pitches. After 10 pitches the batter is out.
7. First two innings the entire roster bats. the rest of the game play 3 outs or bat once through the batting order to end the inning.
8. When the last batter hits, the play must be stopped by having a defensive player touch home plate while having possession of the ball before the last batter reaches home plate. When this occurs, the play stops, and the inning is completed.
9. No stealing bases is allowed.
10. One base is allowed on an overthrow at first.
11. Courtesy Runner – In continuous batting order a player injured while running bases may be substituted for. The replacement runner should be the last made out. If the same player is injured again, they shall be removed from the lineup

## Minor Division 8-9 year olds

1. Game Length: 6 innings or no new inning will start after 1 hour 50 minutes of play.
2. Only 9 defensive players will play the field.
3. Entire roster is in the batting order
4. Every team roster must participate in 6 defensive outs if a full game is played.
5. Little League Rulebook rest requirements for pitchers will be followed. Pitching rubber will be 46 feet from home plate.
6. The completed game (score sheet) form shall be initialed or signed by each participating coach. These forms are to be turned in by the winning coach or manager.
7. Innings will end when the offense is put out 3 times, or 5 scores runs.
  - a. The 5-run rule is suspended at the start of the 6th inning and for the remainder of the game.
8. If after 2 ½ innings the home team is ahead by 15 runs they shall be declared the winner. If after 3 complete innings the visitor's team is ahead by 15 runs, they shall be declared the winner. (15 after 3)
9. If after 3 ½ innings the home team is ahead by 10 runs they shall be declared the winner. If after 4 complete innings the visitor's team is ahead by 10 runs, they shall be declared the winner. (10 after 4)
10. Courtesy Runner – In continuous batting order a player injured while running bases may be substituted for. The replacement runner should be the last made out. If the same player is injured again, they shall be removed from the lineup
11. A team may begin and play a game with 8 players with no penalty. Players arriving late may be inserted at the end of the lineup and in the field(if applicable) when they arrive.

## Major Division

These leagues will follow Little League Rules.

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1. If after 2 ½ innings the home team is ahead by 15 runs they shall be declared the winner. If after 3 complete innings the visitor's team is ahead by 15 runs, they shall be declared the winner. (15 after 3)
2. If after 3 ½ innings the home team is ahead by 10 runs they shall be declared the winner. If after 4 complete innings the visitor's team is ahead by 10 runs, they shall be declared the winner. (10 after 4)
3. Entire roster is in the batting order
4. Every team roster must participate in 6 defensive outs if a full game is played.

## Junior and Senior Division

1. If the home team is ahead by 10 runs after 4 ½ innings, they will be declared the winner. If the visiting team is ahead by 10 runs after 5 complete innings, then they shall be declared the winner. (10 after 5)
2. Courtesy Runner – In continuous batting order a player injured while running bases may be substituted for. The replacement runner should be the last made out. If the same player is injured again, they shall be removed from the lineup.

## All Stars

Fort Des Moines will send an All-Star team from the 9 year old, 10 year old, 11 year old, 12 year old, Junior and Senior divisions.

1. All Star Coaches Selection – Any approved coach may submit a request to coach All Stars. They will be required to notify the President in writing by May 1<sup>st</sup> of their desire to coach All Stars and which age group. Age groups with more than one request will be voted on by the Managers and Coaches in the appropriate division with the Board of Directors. On field actions and interaction with other coaches and umpires may be taken into consideration. The President will break all ties.
2. Player selection – The All-Star player selection process involves the All Star Manager selecting players with direct input from Managers and Coaches within the division in a meeting organized by the commissioner at the appropriate time. Managers should supply the player's names to the Tournament Director so addresses can be verified prior to talking with players.

## Rookie All-Stars

Managers will be selected by commissioner. Teams will be made up of an equal number of players from each team in the division (unless an odd number of teams then equal number of kids from each team and manager selects until roster is filled). Regular season rules apply. Time limit for all-star game is 6 innings or 2 hour 15 minutes.

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## T-Ball All-Stars

Managers will be selected by commissioner. Teams will be made up of an equal number of players from each team in the division (unless an odd number of teams then equal number of kids from each team and manager selects until roster is filled). Regular season rules apply.

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Michael Drey, President  
Fort Des Moines Little League

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Date

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Doug Foust, Vice President  
Fort Des Moines Little League

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Date