



Saginaw Little League – P.O. Box 6206, Saginaw, MI 48608

# Minor Softball Division Local Rules

## Overview

The Minor division is an *instructional* division. The overall objective is to develop a player's core skills (hitting, fielding, throwing, base running and overall baseball knowledge) in a fun environment. It is important that the players enjoy themselves and develop so that they continue to play in future years.

## I. General Rules

1. Games shall last 5 innings. If the home team is leading after the top of the 5<sup>th</sup>, the game shall be over.
  - a. In the event of bad weather or darkness, 4 innings will constitute a complete game, 3 ½ innings if the home team is leading.
  - b. No new inning shall be started after 2 hours has elapsed. The in-progress inning shall be completed.
2. The **home team** is responsible for keeping the official score book in Game Changer.
3. Defensive substitution is unlimited.
  - a. All players must sit out a defensive half-inning once before any player sits out a second defensive half-inning.
4. Each player must play defensively at least **two (2)** innings per complete game.
5. All judgement calls by umpires are final. Managers/coaches arguing with umpires shall be ejected by the umpire and serve an automatic 1-game suspension.
  - a. Rule decisions may be appealed before the next pitch. The appealing manager must have the rule book and rule ready when requesting time out.
  - b. Time out must be granted by an umpire and **both** managers and umpires shall confer together. The final determination shall be made by the umpires.
6. Games will be started with **eight (8)** players.
  - a. Pool players may be used in place of absent players (up to a total of 9) to allow the game to be played at schedule time.
    - i) Notify the division coordinator for assistance in getting pool players.
    - ii) 48-hour notice is required for pool players.
  - b. Defensive penalty: team(s) with **eight (8)** players will play defense with one fewer fielder; defensive manager may select the position that is vacated.
  - c. There is no offensive penalty for playing with **eight (8)** players.
7. The home team playing the last game of the day shall be responsible putting all equipment away, including returning the league bats to the board member on duty.
8. The visiting team shall empty the dugout trash cans and sweep out the dugouts.
9. Managers, coaches, and spectators may not use artificial noisemakers, including but not limited to air horns, bells, thunder sticks, vuvuzelas, etc.
  - a. Umpires shall issue one (1) warning to the manager(s) regarding noise makers. Subsequent notices shall result in the removal of the manager from the dugout.

## II. Offensive Rules

1. Each player must bat in order, regardless of if they are fielding a defensive position.

2. No more than **five (5)** runs may be scored in innings 1 through 4. The 5<sup>th</sup> inning will have unlimited runs, teams must complete 3 outs to end the half inning.
  - a. During the regular season, if, after 5 full innings, the game is tied, the result shall be a tie.
  - b. During the tournament, if, after 5 full innings, the game is tied, extra innings shall be played until a winner is determined. Extra innings will have unlimited runs, teams must complete 3 outs to end the half inning.
    - i) Starting at the top of the seventh inning, and each inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed on second base.
3. A courtesy runner is allowed if the pitcher or catcher is on base with **two (2)** outs.
  - a. The runner shall be the last batter/runner to have been put out in the inning.
  - b. No other pinch running is permitted.
4. Runners may not advance on any attempted pick-off or throw-down from the catcher.
  - a. **Example:** Runners on first and third, the runner on first attempts to steal second and the throw from the catcher is missed by the shortstop and the ball goes into centerfield; the successful runner may not advance past second base, and the runner on third, if no initial steal attempt was made, must remain on third base.
5. Throwing the bat shall result in the following penalties:
  - a. First offense: warning issued to the player and manager.
  - b. Second offense: player shall be called out, ball is dead.
  - c. Third offense: player shall be removed from the game for safety; the vacated position in the lineup will result in an out each time it comes up for the remainder of the game.
    - i) Teams may not intentionally walk batters to reach an automatic third out.
    - ii) Removal of the player is **not** classified as an ejection and does not result in suspension or further disciplinary action.
6. There shall be no more than **one (1)** attempt to steal home per half-inning.
  - a. Runners caught stealing constitute the attempt.
  - b. Runners that successfully return to 3<sup>rd</sup> base following a pickle play, or after passing the half-way point between 3<sup>rd</sup> and home in the umpire's opinion shall constitute the attempt.
  - c. This rule shall be removed on May 18, 2026, with unlimited attempts to steal home being permitted.
7. Batters will start with a count of 0 balls and 1 strike for each at-bat.
  - a. Pitchers will be counted for a called strike prior to throwing the first pitch of the at-bat.
  - b. This rule shall be removed on May 18, 2026, with batters starting with a 0-0 count.