**Introduction:**

This introductory, non-competitive level of baseball is primarily made up of 1st graders with some Kindergarten and 2nd graders depending on ability. Roster size is 9-13 players per team. Players hit a soft baseball pitched by a coach overhand from a knee (a tee is used if the player does not hit the ball into play after five pitches). Three outs per inning OR once through the batting order. No score is kept.

Co-ed teams are formed by the league primarily based on registration date and school area (teams can be a mix of schools, depending on numbers).

**Equipment:**

* Provided by league: jersey, hat, batting tee, balls.
* Provided by the player: glove, bat, batting helmet, protective cup (boys); shoes/pants optional.

**Practice and game times**:

* Weekday evenings:
	+ Monday and Wednesday
	+ Weekday games are limited to 4 innings or 1 hour and 15 minutes whichever comes first.
	+ **Start games on time.** Clock starts at scheduled game start time, not first pitch.
* Weekends:
	+ Weekend games are played on Saturday
	+ Weekend games are limited to 4 innings or 1 hour and 30 minutes, whichever comes first.
* All games played at Forest Hills and Westlake Park dirt field (nearest the fire station):
	+ The international league has full access to the Forest Hills grass area on Monday and Wednesday.
	+ Weekday games will be played on the main diamond and practices should use the other 3 available corners of the field. (Overflow can also use the grass area on the SW side of the school).
	+ Saturday games are played at Westlake Park.
* Cancelled games (weather):
	+ Coaches should communicate with each other before cancelling the game.
	+ Makeup games can be scheduled upon both coaches agreeing on an available practice date/time in which to play the game.
	+ Please refer to the master schedule, pick a date and let me know what is planned to make sure there are no conflicts

**Coaches/parent help:**

Per LOLL insurance rules, we need to have all coaches get a background check and go through the online concussion training. Parents that will help out more than once per season also need the volunteer application to run a background check and go through the online concussion training.

**This is important to get done prior to practices and games starting or coaches and parents may not interact with the kids. Unfortunate, but this is the world we live in. No exceptions to this!**

**Game rules**:

* **Dugouts:**
	+ Home team: Third Base
	+ Visiting team: First Base
* **Scorekeeping:** No score is kept in the International League
* **Batting:**
	+ After 5 pitches, the batter must use the batting tee.
		- **PLEASE NO EXCEPTIONS.** The purpose of this rule is to keep the game moving for the benefit of all players and families.
	+ There are no strikeouts and no bases on balls.
	+ No bunting.
	+ Coaches pitch to their own team.
* **Run limit:** No Run Limit
* **Change of innings:**  Innings are ended with either 3 outs OR once through the lineup whichever comes first.
* **Pitching:**
	+ A coach (adult only) throws the ball to the batter (aiming at where the batter just swung). Coach will kneel on one knee or sit on a bucket approximately 20-30’ feet from home plate to put the pitcher at the same level as the batter. Keep the flight of the ball low.
	+ After 5 pitches, the batter must use the batting tee. PLEASE NO EXCEPTIONS.
	+ Pitchers will use a bucket of balls. If the catcher misses the ball, let it go and use a new ball from the bucket.
	+ It is advised that the batting team have a coach at the backstop with a bucket to pick up balls that get by the catcher.
	+ There are no strikeouts and no bases on balls.
	+ Coaches pitch to their own team.
* **Stoppage of play:**
	+ Once the Ball is thrown back to (or near) the pitcher, play stops. There is no advancing on any overthrow at first, second, third, catcher or pitcher.
	+ Runners can advance more than one base on a batted ball into the outfield, but must stop when the ball enters the infield.
	+ If thrown ball strikes the pitching coach, the ball is dead. The coach should make every effort to avoid being hit by the ball once in play.
	+ If batted ball strikes the pitching coach, the ball is dead and it’s a “Do –Over”.
* **Umpires:**
	+ Coaches serve as the umpires.
	+ The coach pitching acts as umpire and calls outs. He is the Official Umpire for the inning.
	+ Other coaches can assist in the field to help with calls but final ruling is from the coach that’s pitching.
* **Playing time and player rotations:**
	+ All players must play in the field each game.
	+ Coach may field up to 10 players using 4 as outfielders.
	+ Players rotate between infield and outfield positions, subject to safety risks evaluated by coaches.
	+ Positions should be rotated to give equal infield & outfield playing time between all players.
	+ All players bat whether playing in the field that inning or not.
		- Thus, bat the entire team in the lineup
	+ In order for each kid to get the maximum playing time it is imperative to keep the game moving.
* **General rules:**
	+ No bunting.
	+ No base stealing.
	+ No leading off of bases.
	+ No infield fly rule.
	+ Double plays count – runners must tag up on fly balls.
	+ Outfielders play at least 5 steps off the back of the infield.
	+ One player will play the pitcher position but needs to stay behind and to the side of the coach/pitcher.
	+ Run off and on the field between innings to keep the game moving quickly.
	+ Coaches may be in the outfield coaching players on defense.
	+ Please arrive at least 20 min before the game.

**Player safety rules:**

* Batter who throws his bat when leaving the batter’s box
	+ First Offense – Warning is given
	+ Second Offense – Player is called out
	+ Third Offense – Player is ejected from game
* Please communicate this rule early on and encourage the rule in practices
* Bats used in this league must be a baseball bat which meets the USA Baseball Bat standard (USABat) as adopted by Little League. The following link provides additional information on the bat standard: <https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/bat-information/>
* There is no “On-Deck” circle so there are no warm up swings until the batter is in or near the batter’s box
* All batters must wear batting helmets
* Safety ball will be used throughout the entire season
* Boys **must wear cups for practices and games** (please communicate to parents)
* Team medical forms must be with the coaches at all practices and games.

**Field maintenance (Westlake Park):**

* Do your best to rake up the fields before and after the games.
	+ It is good for the fields.
	+ It helps avoid unnecessary injury.
* There is minimal material and tools to dry out the field when conditions are questionable. Thus, please arrive early on those days and get parent/coach involvement to assist when necessary.
* Clean up all trash after every practice and game.

**Other suggestions:**

* Keep practices fun, engaging, and on pace. Kids (and parents) will enjoy the season much more if you spend some time developing your practice plan and have scheduled skill events throughout the practice
* Meet with/email parents early on and let them know the expectations of sportsmanship and a positive environment to learn skills and the rules of the game extends to both players and parents.
* It should be self-explanatory, but the parent meeting should also note that there is **NO ALCOHOL OR TOBACCO** allowed at practice or games – even on sunny, summer-like days. This is 1) wrong and 2) in violation of the LOLL permit for field use.
* If there is an issue with another coach, parent, player or anything else please reach out to me right away if it cannot be resolved quickly and in a positive manner. This is preferable to escalating the issue with group emails and things like that. I am here to help and I will have the backing of the League and its Board of Directors in resolving disputes.