While most of the information in this newsletter has already been addressed in the Head Coach Packet previously emailed to everyone, some additional reminders and explanations are being provided.

Please remember that as a head coach, it is your responsibility to be aware of the rules and regulations that apply to your age division and to also be sure that your assistant coaches are familiar with them as well. We do recognize that questions will come up from time to time, we only ask that questions be asked in a courteous and professional manner.

**Umpire Insight – Pulled Foot at First**

On a play at first base, the umpire in the field’s primary purpose is to make the safe/out call. It is nearly impossible in most situations for that umpire to tell whether the first baseman may have pulled their foot. If the defensive team feels that the first baseman possibly pulled their foot prior to having control of the ball, at the end of playing action an appeal may be made that seeks assistance from the home plate umpire. It is the home plate’s umpire responsibility to watch for the pulled foot at first base whenever possible.

**Pace of play** has always been a point of emphasis and will be even more so heading into this season. A game with a good pace of play ensures that as many games as possible play the full number of innings defined for that age group. It also helps ensure that all players meet the mandatory playing time requirement. Umpires will be pushing teams to hustle on and off the field as well as having their catchers ready to come out on defense. By rule, a courtesy runner for the catcher is mandatory when there are two outs (this only applies to the current catcher of record, not the player a team plans on inserting as catcher the next inning).
The Summer 2021 League marks the first season where ALYB fully adheres to the USA Baseball Bat Certification. This information was provided in several areas on our website as well as on the player registration page and in the player registration confirmation email. It is the head coach’s responsibility to ensure that the bats being used by his or her players are legal and it is highly recommended that coaches check the bats that are being utilized by their players at practices to ensure that the bats are stamped with the USA Baseball certification. A player that enters the batter’s box with an illegal bat will be called out immediately. If the illegal bat is discovered after they have completed their at bat but before the next batter enters the batter’s box, an out may be declared but other options do exist at the defensive team’s discretion.

**Umpire Insight – Experience**

Please keep in mind that the umpires working your games may have varying degrees of experience and background. While some of our umpires have 10+ years of experience and are IHSA licensed, some umpires are young and even though they have a baseball background the only time they umpire games is during the summer. This means that certain umpires may be inclined to notice certain things better than others (i.e., obstruction) while others may need to seek assistance from their partner on the field or even sometimes a board member.

When **prepping the field** on game nights, coaches can find two chalkers inside the blue shed just outside of the 12U right field area. The smaller chalker should be utilized for the 6U and 12U fields as those fields do not require as much chalk. The larger chalker should be utilized for the 8U and 10U fields. On the 12U Diamond, the grass area of the first and third baselines should **never** be chalked, only the batter’s box and the baselines that are in the dirt area. On the 8U field, do not outline a batter’s box but do be sure to mark the baselines as well as the halfway marks between the bases (except for between home and first base). We would also ask coaches that have the last game of the evening to take a few minutes after their game to rake around high traffic areas such as the home plate area and the areas around the bases. With all fields seeing heavy usage once the season starts, we can use as much help as possible in maintaining them.

In accordance with Rule 1.01, teams are allowed **one head coach and two assistant coaches** in the dugout during games. While there is some leniency to this rule during 8U games, this rule should always be adhered to in the 10U and 12U Divisions.

Please remind players that no **jewelry** of any kind shall be worn during games. This includes rings, watches, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, etc. regardless of the item’s composition. Just remember, if the item does not act as an alert to a medical condition, then it should not be worn.

**Umpire Insight – Strike Zone**

By definition, the strike zone in the 10U and 12U Divisions is the area over home plate that is between the batter’s arm pits and the top of their knees. Umpires will be encouraged to call borderline pitches as strikes in the hopes that batters will be more aggressive at the plate.
In keeping with the spirit of **sportsmanship** and maintaining a **positive atmosphere**, no individual shall use language that reflects badly upon opposing players, managers, coaches, an umpire or spectators. Many teams will chatter (“Hey, batter, batter”) when the ball is being delivered. This is usually acceptable and normally not a problem but at no time shall any player, especially the catcher, yell “Swing” at the batter when the ball is being delivered. Cheering and chanting from the dugout can be of any intensity as long as it is positive and directed toward players on their **own team**.

There should be no crescendo as the pitcher is delivering a pitch (or a fielder is attempting to make a play).

**Umpire Insight – Infield Fly Rule**

The Infield Fly Rule only applies in the 10U and 12U Division and can sometimes be overlooked as focus is often on other aspects of the game or one or more of the umpires working the game have less experience. Regardless of whether an umpire calls the infield fly rule, it is the game situation that defines whether it is in effect and if necessary, the situation must be corrected. In regards to “ordinary effort”, this will change from age division to age division and is based on the relative age group and not the individual ability of a player.

The **minimum number of players** required to start a game is eight. Any team **starting** a game with eight players does not incur any penalties, however if they should drop to eight or seven players then those vacated spots become an automatic out (unless the vacancy is due to injury or illness). If an umpire witnesses unsportsmanlike conduct or language by a player toward an umpire, the opposing team or even a member of the same team, the umpire may restrict that player to the bench for a minimum of one inning up to the remainder of the game. If this would drop a team to eight or seven players, the automatic out penalty would apply here as well.

Teams should never be in a position where they cannot field a team as league regulations allow for the **borrowing of players**. 12U and 10U teams may borrow players from the age division below them, while the 8U division may borrow players from within their division. All instances of a team borrowing players require the approval of a board member.

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**Online Resources:**

- **USA Baseball** – Development initiatives, coach education, and more.
- **Little League University** – Resources for parents, coaches and umpires.
- **Baseball Dudes** – Development oriented site with articles on gameplay as well as off the field well-being.
- **Aspen Institute’s Project Play** – Explores the state of youth sports in the past, present and the future.