

AMERICAN LEGION YOUTH BASEBALL
UMPIRE HANDBOOK



INCLUDES INFORMATION FOR THE
FOLLOWING DIVISIONS:

8U (INSTRUCTIONAL) DIVISION
10U (DEVELOPMENTAL) DIVISION
12U (MAJORS) DIVISION
15U (PONY) DIVISION

INTRODUCTION

ALYB umpires are representatives of American Legion Youth Baseball and expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the overall goals and expectations of the ALYB Program and the ALYB Board. This includes showing respect for the players, coaches and families and not escalating a situation where a player, coach or fan takes issue with a call. Missed pitches or errors in judgment will happen. Umpires must maintain a professional demeanor at all times.

THE BASICS

The umpire is the authority figure. If you look the part and act the part, you'll get treated the way you should be - with respect. This starts the minute you show up on the field. An umpire who takes pride in his appearance also takes pride in his game. Respect is all about perception.

Be pleasant. Be polite. But be firm and confident.

General expectations include:

Know the rules: This includes the general rules of baseball as well as any special rules that may exist for the age division that you are officiating. While a large percentage of your games will be calls on balls/strikes and out or safe, try not to get caught off guard by a unique, rare or odd situation.

Points of Emphasis: Prior to the first game of each Summer and Fall League, all umpires will be informed of certain rules or regulations that are deemed "points of emphasis" and that should garner extra attention during games. These are typically new rules or regulations that will be in effect for the first time, have been modified from previous versions, or that are being stressed for compliance and consistency.

Show up on time: Umpires should arrive at the American Legion facility no later than **15 minutes** prior to game time. Umpires may park in the area behind the Concession Stand or in the Pony League parking lot. If you know you will be late, be sure to notify a Board member ahead of time. The first time that an umpire fails to report, he/she will be suspended for a minimum of seven (7) days. The second occurrence will be considered forfeiture of the umpire position with the ALYB Board, and the umpire will be removed from the schedule for all remaining games.

Attire: Umpires in the 8U-12U Divisions should wear shirts that are preferably solid colors (red and blue are preferred). Shorts may be worn, and the overall appearance should be one that does not include clothes with holes or anything that could be interpreted as offensive. If an IHSA licensed umpire is utilized in a 12U or 10U game, they may wear their IHSA clothing. Home plate umpire gear is available in the Concession Stand building if needed.

Game cancellations: Umpires will be notified via text as soon as a decision is made by the Board to cancel games due to inclement weather or poor field conditions.

Compensation: Umpires will be given one beverage per game free of charge. Umpires are expected to ask the concession stand staff for assistance with their order. Umpires will be compensated on a per game basis. Paychecks are distributed on Mondays and are available in the main office area of the Concession Stand.

Cell Phone Use: Umpires shall not use their cell phones during the course of a game but should have them readily available due to an emergency situation or a special situation that requires a Board member. If for some reason it is absolutely necessary to use a cell phone, step to an area out of sight of the fans, coaches and players in between innings and return as quickly as possible in order to monitor activity on the playing field and maintain pace of play.

Smoking/Alcohol: Umpires will not smoke or use smokeless tobacco on or in the vicinity of any playing field, nor drink any alcoholic beverages on the day of the game.

Equipment: Umpires at the 10U Division level and above shall use a ball/strike indicator and a plate brush at all times. These are often available in the Concession Stand building.

Time Limits: The umpires are responsible for monitoring the time limit on all games. In the 12U Division, the timer on the center field scoreboard should always be utilized. Confirm with the home team that someone is available to start the timer. This removes any question as to when game time has expired. At no time shall a coach, parent or spectator be involved in determining the time limit of a game.

Communication: The umpires are a valued extension of the ALYB Board, and it is imperative that umpires notify the Officer of the Day or other Board Member to resolve any issues or concerns involving a game or the Legion Facility in general. This could include an issue with a player, parent or coach or some aspect of the field conditions that need to be addressed.

Before the game:

Confer with your partner: Talk about the teams involved in the upcoming game and things that may be expected to occur during the game. Compare notes on any previous encounters with either of the teams involved in the game. Discuss any rules that may be unclear or who is responsible for calls on the field.

Field preparation: Make sure the managers have the field prepared properly. If any of the foul lines, lines of the batter's box or halfway marks (8U only) are not visible and will make it difficult to call the game effectively, make the responsible team fulfill their duties.

Scoreboards: In 8U-12U games, be sure to give the home team the scoreboard controllers.

Pitching Machine (8U): Before the umpire arrives to the field for the start of the game, the coaches should have already set up the machine, set it to the proper speed and adjusted its positioning in relation to home plate. Prior to the first batter coming up to bat, the umpire should feed a few of the game balls to test the setup of the machine.

During the game:

Pace of play: Keep the game moving. Hustle the players into position and back to the dugout, including warming up pitchers. In the 12U and 10U Divisions, enforce the mandatory courtesy runner rule for the catcher with two outs as well as the rules pertaining to the batter keeping at least one foot in the batter's box between pitches.

Location: Stay near the plate during warm-ups, but out of the way near the backstop. Never hover around a particular dugout, or mingle too closely with players and spectators, as this will cause problems. You don't want it to look like you favor one team or the other. Know the three proper/possible locations of the field

umpire (A, B and C) and do not deviate from them unless absolutely necessary. Do not get together with your partner in between each half inning, this is frowned upon at the higher levels. In the 12U Division, do not sit on top of the backstop wall in between half innings. Between innings, never leave the field, unless it is an emergency.

Making calls: Take your time. Pause - read - react. There is nothing to be gained by rushing, except trouble. Make your calls loud and confident – everyone has a right to know what your call is. Don't be afraid to confer with your partner if you are not sure about something. Don't argue. Listen to reason but be firm. If you are certain that you made the right call, say so, and move on with the game. If you are not sure, listen, use your best judgment, make the call, and move on. Be a team out there: support your partner. Don't change his calls; you aren't supposed to. If you think your partner missed something, when the play is over, call time and go to your partner first away from the players and coaches. Talk it over. Get it right. Then, whoever made the initial call, announce clearly what the call is now. Don't let inane comments bother you. Parents, and coaches will usually say things like "that looked close" and the like, but they are not meant to undermine your authority. Save your 'authority' for prevention of direct, mean spirited, or repeatedly disruptive personal attacks. NEVER get into a shouting match with a spectator. Go to the offender's team manager, and politely ask him to control his parent(s).

Bench conduct: Monitor and address the conduct of players on their benches. Players should not be horse playing or doing anything that is distracting to the game. Players shall not use the area outside of the dugout to warm up, swing bats, use swing sticks, etc. Players should remain in their dugout throughout the game. Although coaches are ultimately responsible for the behavior of their team, some coaches can be overwhelmed in trying to manage the game and watch the actions of their players on the bench. Assistance from an outside party is often welcoming.

After the game:

Reporting: If there has been controversy during the game, you'll need to report it to a Board Member. Submit the final score of the game(s) using the Online Score Reporting Form prior to leaving the facility at the end of the evening.

Scoreboards: In 8U-12U Division games, be sure to collect the scoreboard controllers from the home team and return them to the Concession Stand building.

SEVERE WEATHER

During any threat of lightning and/or inclement weather, the ALYB Board Member(s) on duty will utilize the Little League WeatherBug Mobile App to assess the situation. Any direct observation of lightning by a league official or umpire will result in an immediate stoppage of play and all players should be directed to their respective dugouts. Play will not be allowed to resume until 30 consecutive minutes of no additional lightning is observed.

IMPORTANT: Only an ALYB Board Member may overrule the 30-minute lightning rule based on their personal assessment of visible observations and WeatherBug lightning data.

CHILD BEHAVIOR/DISORDERS

ALYB umpires should be aware of the fact that players of any age can have mental, emotional, and behavioral problems. It can often be difficult to distinguish between silly or goofy behavior and behavior that is a result of a disorder. Inappropriate behavior on the field should always be addressed regardless of the situation and preferably through the head coach but take special care in how you respond (if necessary) to younger children especially those that appear to possibly be challenged in some way.

CODE OF CONDUCT

ALYB umpires are representatives of American Legion Youth Baseball and expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the overall goals and expectations of the ALYB Program and the ALYB Board. This includes showing respect for the players, coaches and families and not escalating a situation where a player, coach or fan takes issue with a call. Missed pitches or errors in judgment will happen. Umpires must maintain a professional demeanor at all times.

Each umpire is authorized and required to enforce all of the rules. Each umpire has authority to order a player, coach, manager to do or refrain from doing anything which affects the administering of these rules and to enforce the prescribed penalties.

Don't look for trouble - it's unnecessary. It will come without any help from you. Your best preparation to handle it when it comes is an attitude of calmness and courtesy.

Do not argue with a coach. If he questions a rules interpretation, explain your ruling. Do not prolong conversation and resume play. If you have any doubt about your ruling, do not be afraid to ask your fellow umpire, and if you are incorrect, change your ruling. This discussion with your fellow umpire should be private and away from coaches and players — keep cool at all times.

The umpire shall report to the League President within twenty-four hours after the end of a game all violations of rules and other incidents worthy of comment, including the disqualification of any manager, coach or player, and the reasons therefore.

APPENDIX A – SPECIAL RULES BY DIVISION

8U Division

Bunts not permitted.

Infield Fly Rule does not apply.

No player may occupy the pitching position/area.

Catching position must be occupied.

Outfielders must have both feet in the grass when pitch is delivered to batter.

Team coming to bat with lead of ten (10) runs or more limited to scoring four (4) runs.

Game time limit of 1 hour and 30 minutes (1 hour and 45 minutes in postseason, no time limit for championship).

Game tied after nine (9) innings recorded as tie game.

10-run rule after four (4) innings in postseason games only.

Ten (10) maximum batters per inning.

Maximum of one base advance by all runners on overthrows on a play at any base that stay within the field of play, even if the ball remains in fair territory.

No stealing or advancing on passed balls.

Base runners must stay in contact with the base until the ball is hit.

Runner must have completely passed the halfway hash mark between bases prior to an infielder having control of the ball with both feet on the infield dirt in fair territory and both hands up in order to be awarded the advance base at the end of playing action.

10U Division

Pitchers – Allowed two (2) consecutive innings.

No on-deck batters.

No intentional walks during regular season only.

Batter may not advance to second base immediately following a base on balls.

Courtesy runner for catcher mandatory with two (2) outs.

Outfielders must have both feet in the grass when pitch is delivered to batter.

Teams allowed five (5) runs per inning (innings 1-3), five (5) runs or take lead by five runs (5) in fourth inning, unlimited runs in fifth inning.

Regulation game is five (5) innings.

Game time limit of 1 hour and 30 minutes for summer regular season and fall tournament games not including championship game (no time limit in all other games).

Base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has been delivered and has reached the batter.

No stealing of home.

12U Division

Pitchers – Allowed two (2) consecutive innings.

No on-deck batters.

Courtesy runner for catcher mandatory with two (2) outs.

Outfielders must have both feet in the grass when pitch is delivered to batter.

Game time limit of 1 hour and 30 minutes for summer regular season and fall tournament games not including championship game (no time limit in all other games).

10-run rule after four (4) innings or 1 hour 15 minutes, 8-run rule after five (5) innings (Fall League only).

12-run rule after three (3) innings in fall games only.

Base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has been delivered and has reached the batter.