4.5 MAJOR DIVISION

4.5.1 Eligibility

MAJOR 1: League Age 12 and under according to the latest Little League Baseball League Age chart
MAJOR 2: League Age 13 and under according to the latest Little League Baseball League Age chart
MAJOR 3: League Age 14 and under according to the latest Little League Baseball League Age chart

4.5.2 Playing Field

a. The distance between bases shall be: **70** feet (First- and Second-Year Majors), **90** feet (Third-Year Majors)
b. The pitching distance shall be: **50** feet (First- and Second-Year Majors), and **60** feet **6** inches (Third Year Majors) measured from the back point of home plate to the center of the front of the pitching rubber.

4.5.3 Equipment--

a. The Home Team dugout is on the third base side, shall provide the official ScoreKeeper, and shall provide 3 new game balls for each game. New game balls are provided by the League at the start of the season. If the home team is unable to provide a ScoreKeeper and the away team cannot provide one as well, the home team shall forfeit the game, but the game may still be played.
b. Any player warming up the pitcher must wear a catcher's mask.
c. The catcher shall wear protective headgear with facemask, throat guard, chest protector and shin guards.
d. All bats must be USABat or BBCOR certified. Penalty for using an illegal bat is an automatic out.
e. Batter/Base runner shall wear protective headgear.
f. For safety reasons, it is required that all male players wear protective cups during practices and games.

4.5.4 Players Positions

a. The maximum number of players fielded per team shall be 9. Free substitution of players will be allowed.

4.5.5 Game

a. A minimum of **8** players on a team is required to start and complete a game.
Any team **failing to maintain the minimum number** of players, **8**, during the course of the game, shall automatically **forfeit** the game. This includes players getting injured, ejected from the game or leaving before the end of the game. Notwithstanding, if both teams agree, the game may continued to be played after the forfeiture up to the limit established in section 4.5.5.b.
b. The game shall consist of either 6 innings or a time limit of: 2 hours, whichever occurs first. No new innings will be started with less than 15 minutes left, unless both teams and the umpire concur.
c. If 5 runs are scored while any one team is at bat, that team will automatically have 3 outs, and be sent to the field. The maximum runs in the last (6th) inning are unlimited and only limited by the remaining time left in the game. If after the time limit has been reached and the game is not complete, the score will revert back to the last complete inning (*or, if the home team is ahead in the bottom of the inning, the score will stand).
d. Mercy Rule: Any time after 5 innings, if a team is behind by **17** or more runs, that team has the option of ending the game.

4.5.6 Pitchers

a. All players shall be eligible to pitch, with the following exceptions:
1) A player classified as an over-age waiver player is declared ineligible to pitch while playing in this division (Major 1, 2 or 3)
b. A pitcher shall pitch in no more than:
1) 85 pitches per game for 11- and 12-year-olds, 95 pitches per game for 13- and 14-year-olds, 3 innings per game, OR 5 innings per 3 days (most restrictive limit applies)
c. When the pitcher pitches the ball to any one batter, it will be considered as 1 inning pitched. The innings pitched shall be inclusive of any games played including other leagues. It is the responsibility of the Coach and Parents to keep track of player's innings pitched.
d. The strike zone will be from the armpits to the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural stance. The umpire shall determine the strike zone according to the batter's usual stance when that batter swings at a pitch.
e. The balk rule is in effect. Per Rule 8.05 of the Little League Baseball Rule Book 2024:
8.05– With one or more runners on base, it is a balk when –
(a) – the pitcher, while touching the plate, makes any motion naturally associated with the pitch and fails to make such delivery;
(b) – the pitcher, while touching the plate, feints a throw to first/third base and fails to complete the throw;
(c) – the pitcher, while touching the plate, fails to step directly towards a base before throwing to that base;

(d) – the pitcher, while touching the plate, throws, or feints a throw to an unoccupied base, except for the purpose of making a play (i.e., they can throw to the base that the runner is trying to steal to)

(e) – the pitcher makes a quick pitch; the umpire will judge a quick pitch as one delivered before the batter is reasonably set in the batter's box

(f) – the pitcher delivers the ball to the batter while not facing the batter;

(g) – the pitcher makes any motion naturally associated with the pitch while not touching the pitcher's plate;

(h) – the pitcher unnecessarily delays the game;

(i) – the pitcher, without having the ball, stands on or astride the pitchers plate, or while off the plate feints a pitch;

(j) – the pitcher, while touching the plate, accidentally or intentionally drops the ball;

(k) – the pitcher, while giving an intentional base on balls, pitches when the catcher is not in the catcher's box;

(l) – the pitcher, after coming to a legal position (wind-up or set), removes one hand from the ball other than in an actual pitch, or in throwing to a base;

(m) – the pitcher delivers the pitch from the set position without coming to a stop.

Also, from Rule 8.01:

8.01 – Legal pitching delivery. There are two legal pitching positions, the Windup and Set Positions, and either may be used at any time. Pitchers may disengage the pitcher's plate (i.e. step backward off the plate towards second base) after taking their signs but may not step quickly onto the pitcher's plate and pitch (i.e. quick pitch, Rule 8.05(e)). If the pitcher uses the Set Position and elects to use "the stretch" to receive their sign from the catcher, they must come to a complete and discernible stop before delivering the ball to the batter (i.e., pitching).

NOTE: Any time the pitcher disengages from the plate legally, they are then considered a fielder instead of a pitcher, and the pitch/balk rules no longer apply until they stand on the pitcher's plate again.

f. Once a pitcher leaves the game, the pitcher may re-enter the game to any position other than the position of "pitcher".

g. Any pitcher hitting 3 batters in one game shall be removed after hitting the third batter. The player may re-enter the game at any position other than the position of "pitcher".

4.5.7 Batters

a. All players on the roster will bat in a rotational basis. For example, if there are 14 players on a team, all fourteen will bat before the leadoff batter bats again.

b. Any batter failing to bat for any reason, regardless of the number of batters in the batting order, is automatically out the first time that he/she fails to bat.

EXCEPTION: No penalty if borrowed players from lower divisions elect to not bat for safety concerns.

c. Running on a dropped third strike is in effect. (When the catcher drops the ball on the 3rd strike.) 1st base must be <u>unoccupied</u> with less than 2 outs; and with <u>2 outs, 1st</u> base may be <u>occupied</u>.

d. Infield Fly Rule shall be in effect.

4.5.8 Base runners

a. **Major 1**: Head first sliding is NOT permitted. **Major 2 & 3:** Head first sliding is permitted.

b. Stealing of home is allowed.

c. Lead-offs are allowed.

d. Defensive players shall keep clear of their base / base path if there is not a play imminent. Catchers shall stand considerably in front of or behind home plate if there is no play imminent.

e. Base runners are to avoid collisions with defensive players whenever possible. **The runner will be called out** if they do not slide or avoid the defensive player. The umpires shall have ultimate judgment.

f. A courtesy runner is allowed for the catcher, regardless of the number of outs (*mandatory if two outs*). The last out is the courtesy runner. This rule is to help expedite the start of the next half inning and warm up the pitcher.