**Southwest Portland Little League**

**2015 A Rules and Regulations**

This document takes precedence when differing from Official Minor League Baseball Rules or past practices.

**General**

1. **Purpose of A Baseball**
* The A level is a non-competitive, developmental level of baseball. No score is kept at this level.
* The League expects players to get the opportunity to play in all positions that they can play safely. You are highly encouraged to allow every player to play a minimum of 1 inning in the infield.
* The batting line-up should change from game to game. The same players should not be batting first and last every game.
1. **Game Times**
* Weeknight, (Thursday) games start at 6:00 pm.
* Saturday games start at 9:00 am.
1. **Length of Game**
* Four (4) innings minimum, five (5) innings maximum
* No new inning begins after one (1) hour and 30 minutes of play. The coaches are allowed to use discretion as deemed practical to shorten any game time due to weather or other playing conditions as long as deviations from official rules are agreeable to all involved.
* An inning is defined as three (3) outs or five (5) runs (whichever occurs first). There is no scoreboard or scorebook at A. The bench coach on the offensive team is responsible for keeping track of the number of runs scored and calling the inning after five (5) runs are scored if necessary.
1. **Playing Fields**
* Markham Elementary School
* Stephenson Elementary School
* Little Gabriel Park (SE corner of Gabriel Park) & Hitchin Field (corner of SW 45th & Vermont)
* Other SWPLL fields as made available
1. **Umpires**
* Umpires at A will consist of league-approved Managers or Coaches. The offensive Manager or Coach is responsible for calling balls and strikes, as well as plays in the field, from behind the pitcher, where he will also operate the pitching machine when appropriate.
1. **Player Rules:**
* If a team cannot provide nine (9) players at the start of the game, the opposing team supplies defensive players (if available) to the short-handed team until such time as nine (9) original team players are available to play the game. Borrowed players shall be assigned outfield positions and be substituted when it is their turn to bat for their original team.
* If both teams cannot field a full team, then the game may be played with less than nine (9) players; each team shall field the same number of defensive players.
* If both teams have at least 11 players present at the game, then two (2) additional outfield positions are recognized and assigned: **Mid-left** (between left and center field) and **Mid-right** (between center and right field).

**Player position assignments:**

* + Catcher: located between batter and backstop
	+ Pitcher: positioned half-way between home plate and second base (**behind** the adult pitcher)
	+ Bases: players assigned to cover 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases
	+ Shortstop: positioned between 2nd and 3rd bases
	+ Outfield: **All other players** must be positioned in the outfield at least six (6) feet **outside** of (behind) an imaginary line drawn between 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases until the ball is hit by the batter. **Additional infielders are not allowed**.
* **Each player shall play a minimum of three (3) innings per game.** Substitutions may occur freely **at the beginning** of each defensive turn. Fielder substitution **during** defensive play may **only** occur as necessary for pitcher change and replacement of injured players.
* Players who are not playing in the field (on defense) or at bat, on base, or coaching a base (on offense) must remain in the dugout at all times during the game, with the exception of pitcher warm-up or use of the restroom. No food is permitted in the dugout during the game with the exception of sunflower seeds or bubble gum, Manager permitting (obviously, food required for a medical condition is acceptable).

**7. Coaching**

* Manager and Coaches for the defensive team shall remain on the bench or in the dugout area, and are not allowed on the field.
* The offensive team’s league-approved coaching staff provides the umpire/pitching machine operator behind the pitcher’s mound, a coach on the bench, and base coaches at 1st and 3rd base. If fewer than 4 league approved manager/coaches are available for a game, helmeted players may be base coaches. Parents or volunteers who are not league-approved are not allowed in the bench area or on the field.

**Pitching**

1. **General**
* The pitching distance is 36 feet (from the point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber).
* It is recommended that coaches throw from a knee (it is difficult to learn to hit from a steep angle if coach is tall)
* A Safe-Soft ball (soft baseball) is used at all games.
* A batting tee **is not used** at the A level during games.
1. **Pitching Protocol**
* A league-approved manager or coaches for the offensive team will pitch to their players. The batter will have 5 swinging attempts to hit the ball. If the ball is hit, play occurs accordingly. If the batter is hit by a pitched ball, batter remains at bat. If the batter does not hit the ball, after 5 swinging attempts, then the batter returns to the dugout. No out is recorded.
* There are no strike-outs.
* Foul balls count as swinging attempts. If the batter hits a foul ball on the fifth swinging attempt, then they will continue to have another attempt, until either the ball is hit in fair territory or a swing is made without hitting the ball.

**Infield**

* The infield fly rule does not apply.
* The ball is considered **dead** **(i.e. runners must stop)** when an attempt to make a play at any base occurs. Runners may **NOT** run if an overthrow occurs when an attempt to make a play at any base occurs.
* At the end of play, the ball is returned to the player pitcher on the mound, who then hands the ball off to the operator of the pitching machine or pitches the ball as defined above. There is **NO** runner advancement for overthrows to the pitcher at the end of a play.

**Batter/Runner**

* All players present at the game are on the batting roster and cycle through the batting order accordingly.
* No **on-deck** batter is allowed.
* Players must slide feet first while advancing forward. A runner is declared out otherwise.
* Bat throwing is not allowed. For the first offense, the **team** is warned of the violation by the umpire. For the second offense, each subsequent batter that throws the bat is called out.
* Bunting is **not** allowed.
* Base stealing is **not** allowed. Runners must be touching their base until the ball has crossed home plate. Players leaving their base early are first warned by the umpire, but are called out if the violation occurs again before that player reaches home plate.
* Base coaches: The purpose of an adult base coach at this level is to teach players how to be base coaches. Two (2) adult base coaches are allowed, only if there is an adult bench coach in the dugout. There must also be a helmeted player in the coaching box. Base coaches must stay in the chalked coaching box and not make physical contact with the runner. Adult base coaches must be a league-approved Manager and/or Coach of the team. A player may be a base coach in place of an adult.