

2021 Minor Farm Rules

Abington Little League
abingtonlittleleague.com

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Minor Farm Objective

The objective of the Minor Farm Division is, while having fun, to develop players' basic skills, increase their knowledge of baseball and to teach good sportsmanship. Coaches will make the practices and games enjoyable for all the players on the team while providing the necessary instruction to prepare them for the next level of play. There are no league standings and the final score of the game is not important. What is important is that the players advance their baseball skills, learn about sportsmanship and have a great time being involved with the team.

Minor Farm Playing Rules

In general we will follow the Little League Baseball Minor Farm Division Official Regulations and Playing Rules. We have made several adjustments to these rules which will allow players of lesser ability to have a more positive experience at the plate and which will also increase the opportunities for fielders to make plays. Several other changes have been made to better fit the needs of our League.

Coaching Resources

1. Little League Coach Pitch Manual
2. Coaching video located at abingtonlittleleague.com/training
3. www.littleleaguecoach.org
4. www.QCbaseball.com
5. Coaching Youth Baseball the Ripken Way; Cal & Bill Ripken
6. Check out the internet for drills & You Tube for videos
7. Freebaseballlineups.com

Batting

1. List all attending players in the batting lineup. Players will bat in this order whether or not they are playing in the field. Any player showing up late for the game will be added to the end of the batting order. There will be no other changes to the lineup allowed during the game. It is **required** that the coach **alter** the lineup for each game, thus allowing players to bat in different positions in the lineup **throughout the whole season**. Keep a chart of where you play and bat everyone.
2. **Unless a batted ball lands in the air in the outfield grass**, the batter is **limited to a single**. Though there will be some very hard hit balls off of the infield dirt which quickly reach the outfield, such batted balls will remain a single. If the batted ball reaches the outfield grass in the air, the batter has the option of trying to reach second base. The batter may be thrown out attempting to reach second base.
3. On **balls hit in the air to the outfield**, the batter is **limited to a double**. **Runners** already on base are allowed to **advance a maximum of 2 bases**. If the **batter attempts** but does **not successfully** make it to second base, any **runners** already on base are **limited to** advancing only **one base**. For instance, a runner on second base may attempt to score on a ball hit to the outfield grass in the air. However, if the batter is thrown out at second base, the runner who was trying to score from second base must return to third base. Minor Farm is a developmental division. This rule will eliminate the taking of extra bases by overzealous coaches, prevent a “merry-go-round” atmosphere when balls are hit to the outfield, keep more runners on base allowing more defensive chances for the fielders and remove difficult judgment calls for the coaches.
4. If a batter actually hits a ball over the outfield fence, he will be awarded a homerun and all runners on base will score.
5. When **batting**, all players will use a batting helmet with a **facemask or jaw guard**.
6. All **players** are required by Little League Baseball to **wear a protective cup**.
7. There is **no stealing or bunting** in Minor Farm.
8. There is **no on deck batter**. All **players** must **remain** in the **dugout** except for the batter.
9. **During the first half of the season, when coaches are pitching**, batters are to be given **5 strikes**. Please **limit** the number of **pitches** per individual batter. The **batter must** be encouraged to **swing** at strikes. **Strikes** may be “**called**” if the batter refuses to swing. It is expected that by pitching from one knee early on in the season that there will be more contact, thereby eliminating excessively long at-bats. During **player pitch** batters will be given **three strikes only**. **If a coach takes over for a player pitcher, only three strikes will be given**.

Pitching

Minor Farm will be a mix of coach & player pitching.

Coach Pitch:

1. The **beginning** of the season will be **coach pitch exclusively**.
2. The coach will pitch to his/her own batters. There will be **no walks; only swinging strikes count**. Encourage your batters to know the strike zone and to be aggressive. Don't let them wait for the "pitch of their dreams". Remember that the **batter gets 5 strikes** during coach pitch. (except when the coach relieves a player pitcher during player pitch, then only three strikes are given)
3. **Limit the number of pitches** thrown to an **individual batter**. This is intended for that batter that just stands there taking pitches. If necessary, call good pitches strikes if a batter continuously refuses to swing. They need to learn to swing!
4. To start the season, **coaches will pitch** from **one knee**, approximately **25'-35'** away **from home plate**. For the **weaker** batters move up to the **25' mark**; for the **average** batters move back to the **30' mark**; for the **stronger** batters move back to the **35' mark**. The **coach** should strive to **throw flat, dart-like pitches without a big arc**. The purpose of this is to **eliminate the height disparity** between batter and coach. This will allow the batter to clearly see the ball as it is released from the coach's hand and to improve the batter's ability to track the ball as it reaches the hitting zone.
5. As the season progresses, the coach will evaluate when to pitch from a standing position for certain batters. Perhaps some batters will be pitched to from the knee for the entire season; other batters may be pitched to standing up right from the beginning of the season.

Player Pitch:

1. **Initially player pitch** will be allowed **only** during the **weekday games**. The time slots on Saturday are too restrictive. As the players become better at pitching **later** in the season, **some Saturday player pitch** may be attempted **upon** the mutual **agreement** of both coaches.
2. Once **player pitch** begins, all batters will receive **3 strikes only** whether the coach or a player is pitching.
3. **Balls and strikes** will be **called** by the **batting team's coach** who will **umpire** from the **behind** the **catcher**. A coach from the fielding team should be on the mound to guide the pitcher. The batting team should have a coach stationed behind the umpiring coach to retrieve the balls which the catcher misses. If the catcher does catch the ball, he should just roll it behind himself to the backup coach. This eliminates a lot of wasted time.
4. Err on the side of a **larger strike zone**. We want the batters to swing the bat and not to look for walks. Explain this to the batters so that they understand that they should be swinging and not looking.
5. The **pitchers** will **throw** from about **5 feet in front** of the regular rubber. We will have a second pitching rubber permanently installed on Field # 3 and # 4. Pitchers **must** pitch from this **second rubber**, not in front of it. The distance the pitcher player will throw from is around **40 feet**. The pitching rubber at OLP field is about **40 feet**.
6. Use your **best judgment** in choosing whom you select to pitch. Many players will want to pitch, but most players clearly will not be ready. This is an opportunity to explain to the players why independent practice is so important.
7. **Batters hit** by a pitch during player pitch will be awarded first base. However, the **player should be given the option to continue the at bat**. If the batter wants to keep hitting, just call the pitch which hit him a ball.
8. In order to prevent a "Merry-Go-Round" situation, the **player pitcher must** be **pulled** after **walking or hitting four batters**. After the player pitcher is pulled, a **coach must finish** pitching the inning.
9. **An individual pitcher** is **limited to one inning** of pitching **per game**.

10. Keep an **eye on the time** and don't let the game go too long.

Fielding

1. It's **required** that coaches **rotate** fielding **positions throughout the season** in order to allow the players to develop the skills needed to play different positions.
2. To ensure that all players are properly rotated into all defensive positions which they may **safely** play, the **following rules apply**:

- a) **In order to develop catchers and not penalize their "non-catching infield time,"** a second inning played in the position of catcher will be **counted as an outfield inning** instead of an infield inning. If a player catches only one inning in a game, that one inning as Catcher will be counted as an infield position. A player may catch no more than two innings per game.
- b) **If 9-11 players show:** each player **must play a minimum of 3 innings** in the **infield**, with a **maximum of 4 innings** in the **infield** for an individual player (depending on how many player show. See chart below).
- c) **If 12 players show:** each player **must play 3 innings** in the **infield**.
- d) **If 13+ players show:** an individual **must play a minimum of 2 innings** in the **infield**, with a maximum of 3 innings in the infield for an individual player.

Note: Regardless of how many players are at a game, an individual player may play no more than 2 innings at the same position. Use the following chart to help prepare your fielding assignments.

<p>7 Players: 42 fielding slots (6 outfield/36 infield)</p> <p>1) 6 players play 1 inning in the outfield 2) 1 player plays zero innings in the outfield 3) 5 players play 5 innings in the infield 4) 1 player plays 6 innings in the infield</p>	<p>8 Players: 48 slots (12 outfield/36 infield)</p> <p>1) 4 players play 4 innings in the infield 2) 4 players play 5 innings in the infield 3) 4 players play 2 innings in the outfield 4) 4 players play 1 inning in the outfield</p>
<p>9 Players: 54 fielding slots (18 outfield/36 infield)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">54 player slots</p> <p>1) Everyone plays the whole game 2) Everyone plays 4 innings in the infield 3) Everyone plays 2 innings in the outfield</p>	<p>10 Players: 60 fielding slots (24 outfield/36 infield)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">60 player slots</p> <p>1) Everyone plays the whole game 2) 6 players play 4 innings in the infield 3) 4 players play 3 innings in the infield 4) 6 players play 2 innings in the outfield 5) 4 players play 3 innings in the outfield</p>
<p>11 Players: 60 fielding slots (24 outfield/36 infield)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">66 player slots (necessitates 6 bench slots)</p> <p>1) 5 players play the whole game in the field 2) 8 players play 3 innings in the infield 3) 3 players play 4 innings in the infield 4) 6 players sit one inning on the bench</p>	<p>12 Players: 60 fielding slots (24 outfield/36 infield)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">72 player slots (necessitates 12 bench slots)</p> <p>1) Everyone plays 3 innings in the infield 2) Everyone plays 2 innings in the outfield 3) Everyone sits 1 inning on the bench</p>
<p>13 Players:</p> <p>60 fielding slots (24 outfield/36 infield)</p> <p>78 player slots (necessitates 18 bench slots)</p>	<p>1) 10 players play 3 innings in the infield 2) 3 players play only 2 innings in the infield 3) 3 players are on the bench each inning. 4) 5 players will end up on the bench for 2 innings</p>

3. **All players are required** to play **four** defensive **innings** each **game**. A problem may arise when you are the visiting team or the game is shortened by time. When this occurs, it is up to the coach to make sure the players who were short innings in that game start the following game.
4. Use **ten** players on the field including **four outfielders** arranged in normal formation. **No "short" fielders.** Playing outfielders "short" limits base hit opportunities and prevents players from learning how to play the outfield properly. There will be a **white line** stretching across the outfield **behind** which the **outfielders must position** themselves. This line is approximately 33' from the back edge of the infield dirt. It is the **responsibility** of those **coaches** stationed in the outfield to **keep the outfielders behind this line** until the ball is hit.
5. **Outfielders may not make** an **unassisted play** in the infield. They may throw a ball to an infielder to make a force or tag play. However, **outfielders may not receive** a thrown **ball from an infielder** to make a force or tag play. Their role is to field fly balls, ground balls and serve as a back up or cut off for other outfielders and as a back up for the infielders.

This rule allows outfielders to play the outfield positions and learn the basics of throwing to cutoff men or to the bases for both force outs and tag plays.

6. There is **no Infield Fly Rule**. There would be too many discrepancies on fly balls and humpback liners. By not having the Infield Fly Rule, coaches can teach runners the basics of reading line drives and fly balls. Players need to learn the fundamental skill of reading balls hit in the air.
7. Only players can field batted balls. **Coaches** may stand in the field instructing the players, but **cannot catch/stop/throw balls** in play. It is advisable to have coaches on the field both in the infield and outfield in order to provide instruction and encouragement during the game.
8. During coach pitch, use a **fielder** in the **pitching position** on either side of the mound, but **not in front** of the mound. This is for the player's safety. Also be **careful** who plays **1st base and pitcher**. Some players may not be capable.

Line Up Exchange

In order to **help coaches follow** the above **rules** for batting line ups and fielding rotations, the Minor and Major divisions are requiring a **pre-game exchange** of **batting** and **fielding line ups**. Each team will **use the same, league supplied form**. This form is on the website: **Go to abingtonlittleleague.com/forms**. **Click on Minor Farm Lineup Exchange**. Doing this will also help coaches to be better prepared and will prevent wasted time between innings as coaches try to figure out where to place their players on the field.

- Make **two copies** of your **line up** before the game (one for you and one for the opposing coach).
- Add the player's uniform number next to their name.
- Emphasize to your **parents** that they **must tell you** when their child will not be coming to a game. (This will help to minimize last minute changes to your line up.)
- **Keep track** of where you bat and play your players from game to game. This will **ensure** that you are giving the players **equal playing time** at all the **positions** and in all the **batting slots**.

Games

1. During the week, the **home team** will have the **field** for **warm-ups** from **4:30pm to 5:00pm**. The **visitors** will have the **field** from **5:00pm to 5:30pm**. On Saturdays, both teams will share the field for fifteen minutes for warm up. **No batting practice** will be allowed on the **fields on Saturdays**. The batting cages may be available, though.
2. **Weekday games during the school year** should **not go past 7:30 PM**. **Saturday games** can go no longer than **1 hour and 45 minutes**. The only exception is the last game of the day. Once this **time limit** has been **reached**, the **game must end** regardless of the situation.
3. All **games**, time permitting, will be **six innings** in length. The **"five-run-rule"** is in effect for the **first five innings**. Once five runs have been scored, the side is retired and no additional runs are counted. Exception: On an "over-the-fence" homerun, all resulting runs will count and the inning is over. In the **sixth inning**, **three outs must be recorded** and there is **no run-limit** in effect. There is **no "five run rule"** to stop or end a game; only the time limits.
4. **Play the bottom of the Sixth Inning** if time permits, **even if the home team** has already **won**. The more the kids play, the better they get.
5. **Assistant Coaches**. In the Minor Farm Division it is very important to have **adequate help** on the **field** not only for the sake of instruction but also for keeping order in the **dugout** and for ensuring a smooth flow of the game with minimal wasted time. When **your team is batting** you will need a Coach Pitcher (during Coach Pitch), a person behind the catcher to retrieve all the passed balls, a first and third base coach and preferably two parents in the dugout who will manage the batting order, get the batting helmets on the players and generally keep watch over the kids. **Moms** seem to fulfill the dugout roles the best! When **your team is in the field** you should have a coach on each side of the infield, at least one if not two coaches in the outfield and of course your dugout staff to watch the players on the bench.

6. The **coaches on the field** should provide instruction, encouragement and keep their players focused on the action of the game. Remember that **Minor Farm** is a **developmental division**. You need to **constantly guide** the players on the very **fundamentals** of every aspect of the game with almost every pitch. This **cannot** be done while screaming from the dugout. **Coaches need** to be out in the field **shadowing their players while explaining** what can happen on the very next pitch. Players of this age quickly can lose their focus and take their eyes and attention off of the batter.
 7. **Weather:** If **lightening** is seen, or the detector in the concession stand goes off, the **game is suspended** immediately. Everyone go a car. Players are not allowed to stay in the dugout. You must **wait 30 minutes** from when the **last lightning strike** is seen or registered on the detector to resume play. No exceptions.
6. **Cancellations:**
- a) The **league** and **only the league** will **cancel games**. This determination will be made as soon as it is feasible and will be communicated to the coaches and players as quickly as possible through email blasts.
 - b) **Make-up Games:** Contact the commissioner to find a time slot and a field to schedule a possible make-up game.

Safety

1. All **players** must **avoid contact** when there is a **play at a base**. What constitutes a play? When the fielder has the ball in his/her glove; or is preparing to catch a throw in order to make a tag on the runner.
2. **First aid kits** will be supplied to each coach. Additional supplies will be available in the concession stand.
3. **Coach's Binder:** Please have on hand at all times during games and practices. The binder should contain the **player's contact information** and these **rules**.
4. In the event that a player is injured, the **coach** must **fill** out an **accident report** and send it to Mary Summa, the Safety Officer at her email: marysumma29@gmail.com
5. All **players** are required to **wear a protective cup**.
6. There is **no on-deck batter**. Only the player at the plate may hold a bat.

Behavior

1. **Players** and **coaches** must read, agree and **sign** the **code of conduct form**. This is a binding agreement between the coach/player and the league. It can be found on the league website.
2. Coaches must teach the players **good sportsmanship** and practice it themselves. Coaches, please set a good example for the players.
3. **Smoking** is **not** permitted at any of the fields used for practices or games.
4. Animals are **not** permitted at Ackerly.
5. **Bad language** will **not** be **tolerated** from coaches or players. Violations may result in suspensions for coaches or players.
6. **No taunting** or **criticizing** teammates or opponents will be tolerated.
7. Any player **throwing equipment** in anger shall be **ejected** from the game by his own coach.

Concession Stand

1. **The home team must provide one volunteer per game to work the concession stand. Games cannot begin** if the concession stand is **not staffed** with volunteers. Use your **team parent** to **schedule** volunteers. Concession Stand volunteers do **not** need clearances.

Field Maintenance

1. Try to get to the field early to **line** the **foul lines** and **batter box**.
2. After each game, the **two teams** should **rake** the infield, the pitcher's mound and the home plate area. Avoid raking the infield dirt into the grass.
3. Brooms and rakes are provided in each dugout. Please **sweep the dugout** after each game.
4. Have players **cleanup** all the **garbage** in the dugout and ask parents to do the same around the stands.
5. **Empty** the **dugout garbage cans** into the **dumpster** located in the parking lot when the cans are full.

Equipment Check List

1. Catcher's equipment: 2 shin guards, chest protector and catcher's helmet
2. 3 runners' helmets
3. 2 batting helmets (with face mask)
4. Medical kit
5. Baseballs: Soft Compression, Level #5 (Rawlings ROTB5) or similar
6. Rubber practice bases
7. Little League approved bat
8. Batting Tee
9. Kneeling Pad
10. Coach's Binder
11. Equipment bag itself

General Information

1. **Abington Little League Website:** abingtonlittleleague.com. Encourage parents to frequent it for news and info.
2. **Practice:**
Before the season: Twice a week for 1 ½ hours per session
During the season: A **weekly practice** is highly recommended. At a minimum, try to practice **at least** every other week. More than one practice per week is **not** permitted.
3. **Lack of players:** Always try to get the game in. Seek volunteers from the team with more players to play the field for the team which is short on players.
4. **Tournament:** There will be a tournament at the conclusion of the season. The teams will be paired **randomly** for the first round. Your regular season record means nothing for the tournament pairings.
5. **Baseballs:** Minor Farm uses a Soft Compression Level #5 Baseball. It is a little harder than a tee ball.

6. **Uniforms:** You will receive your uniforms before the season begins. The uniform consists of a shirt and a hat. Players do not need baseball cleats. Players must wear long pants for games. Baseball pants are not necessary.
7. **Team Parent:**
 - a) Arranges staffing for the concession stand when your team is scheduled to work the stand.
 - b) Oversees any fundraising projects.
 - c) Help out with any other off the field activity. (Ex. call parents about rainouts; help arrange a team party; collect background checks; etc.)
8. **Team Party:** This is entirely up to the coach. Parents are very willing to pitch in by bringing food and drinks. Parties don't have to be at the coach's house; there are many local parks with pavilions and picnic tables.
9. **Trophies:** The Abington Little League does **not** supply trophies or medals. Coaches can collect funds or purchase such items independently if they wish. It is not necessary. The winning team of the end of year tournament will receive trophies, while the runner up team will receive medals.

Clearances

The following **three clearances**, all located on "abingtonlittleleague.com/volunteering", must be filled out by every volunteer who comes into contact with the players on the field. **Without** these **clearances**, you are **not permitted** to step onto the field. Please have any and all assistants get these forms filled out as soon as possible. **Submit** all three **clearances** via our **website** or send an email to **Mary Summa**, our League's safety officer at **Marysumma29@gmail.com**. The three clearances are:

1. Little League Volunteer Application 2019 (your social security number and a copy of your driver's license are both required each year you volunteer)
2. PA Child Welfare
3. PA Criminal History

Clearance #1 must be filled out every year.

Clearances #2 and #3 are good for five years. If you already have these two clearances, send a copy of them to Mary Summa at Marysumma29@gmail.com

Minor Farm Tournament Rules

The tone of the tournament is a little more intense than the regular season. The score now counts and, of course, there are consequences for winning and losing. But let's not lose sight of the fact that this is still a friendly, developmental division. You can tell the kids that there are some nice trophies awaiting the winner. The runner up team will receive second-place medals.

1. The tournament is single elimination
2. It is all coach pitch
3. All players will receive three strikes. Foul balls do count as strikes. The batter can foul off as many pitches as they can.
4. Coaches have the option to pitch standing up or from the knee. You can change from batter to batter as you wish. Whether you are standing up or on the knee, you must pitch from the dirt and not in the grass in front of the pitcher's mound area.
5. All fielding rotations are the same as in the regular season. Please refer to the Fielding Chart. You can, however, play your stronger players in the key positions a little more than you may have during the regular season. In other words, you may choose to not put your weaker players in certain infield positions during the tournament even though you put them there during the regular season. For example, you may have played a weaker player at shortstop during the season but will not play them at shortstop during the tournament.
6. However, you must still abide by the player fielding limitations found in the rule book under the Fielding Chart section of the regular season rules.
7. You can structure your batting lineup in a way in which you think it is strongest. This means that you can have the same kids batting in the same order throughout the tournament if you wish.
8. Please keep the outfielders in their outfield positions. The championship game will be played on field number one. I will not be allowed to paint the outfield line on that field. Instead, I will place safety cones to mark off the outfield limit. Please be vigilant in keeping your outfielders in the proper position during all games.
9. Please exchange lineups before the game so that each team can keep score accurately. Periodically check the score with the other team to make sure that both teams have the same score.
10. A team must have a minimum of eight players in order to advance with a win. If you cannot field eight players, please still play the game with however many players you can field.
11. If a team can only field eight players, an out will automatically be recorded in the spot where the ninth batter would have come to the plate.
12. If a team has only nine or eight players to start the game, and one of those players is injured or cannot finish the game for some extraordinary circumstance, the game will continue with an out being recorded in the spot where that player would have batted. If this team were to win the game with eight or even seven players, the victory would stand and said team would advance to the next round.
13. The following rule also applies to a team which can field only eight players: Under the chart for eight players, four players must play five innings in the infield. Each of those four players who will play five innings in the infield must play catcher for one of those five innings. This is because the catcher has the least influence on making outs in the infield.
14. There is no time limit on tournament games. Play all games to the end, regardless of time.
15. All other regular season rules are still in effect.
16. Each team must provide one person to staff the concession stand for three innings per game. The team listed on the top of the pairing will work the first three innings; the team listed on the bottom of the pairing will work the last three innings. Games CANNOT start until a volunteer is provided for the concession stand.
17. The winning team must email me the outcome of the game.