

## OFFICIAL ROOKIE BALL DIVISION RULES

This document constitutes the official, binding rules of the Erindale Little League's Rookie Ball Division. These rules are based on the principles and structure of Little League Canada and Baseball Canada instructional divisions. All coaches, umpires, and team officials are required to know and strictly enforce these rules.

Rookie Ball is an instructional division. Games are officially scored, standings are maintained, and the season concludes with playoffs. Player development, safety, and sportsmanship remain the primary objectives, and rules are to be applied consistently and uniformly.

---

### 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1 Purpose:** Erindale Little League (ELL) is committed to providing a fun, safe, and positive environment for its players to develop as baseball players and individuals, and to enjoy the game of baseball. All players in ELL shall receive equal playing time, regardless of ability.

**1.2 Affiliation:** ELL is affiliated with Little League Canada and strives to follow the Little League Official Regulations and the Little League Operating Manual, available at:

<https://www.littleleague.org/>

**1.3 Applicability:** These rules govern the operation of ELL's House League Rookie Ball division unless otherwise specified.

**1.4 Rule Amendments During Season:** In-season adjustments or changes to ELL House League rules may occur. Recommended changes shall be brought forward by the Division Convenor to the Vice President (VP) of Baseball. Once approved, changes shall be communicated to coaches by the VP of Baseball or the President.

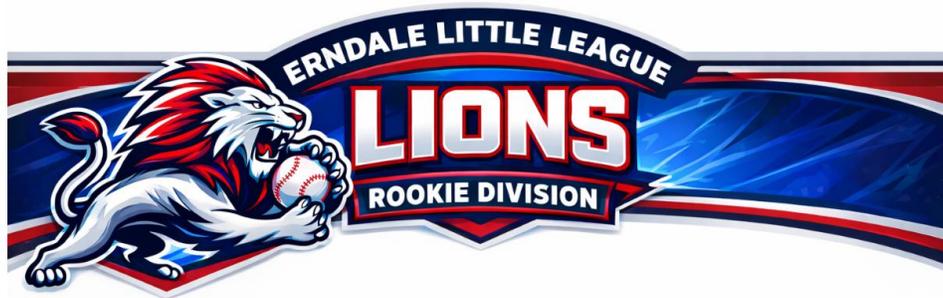
**1.5 Annual Review:** ELL's House League rules are reviewed annually prior to the start of the season by the Board of Directors. The VP of Baseball shall review the rules prior to the start of the season.

---

### 2. GAMES, GAME TIMES & CURFEWS

**2.1 Scheduled Game Times:** Rookie Ball games start at 6:15 p.m., unless otherwise changed by the scheduler. Players and coaches are expected to arrive early to warm up and prepare for the game. HOME AND VISITOR teams are responsible for field setup.

**2.2 Official Time:** In all circumstances, the home plate umpire's timepiece shall be the official time. Coaches and both teams' scorekeepers must be notified of the time of first pitch.



**2.3 Minimum Players to Start:** A game shall begin provided each team has eight (8) players available to play during the regular season. Should a team, for any reason during play, have fewer than eight (8) players available, a fifteen (15) minute grace period will be allowed to restore the minimum roster. Failure to do so will result in a forfeit.

**2.4 Grace Period & Forfeits:** A team shall be deemed to have defaulted if it does not have eight (8) players ready to play by the scheduled start time. A fifteen (15) minute grace period may be granted by the umpire if a player or call-up is en route. Once the grace period has expired, the game shall be forfeited.

### **2.5 Regular Season Time Limits & Dead Ball**

**2.5.1 Start of a New Inning:** A new inning is deemed to start immediately upon completion of the previous inning.

**2.5.2** No new inning shall start after one (1) hour and forty-five (45) minutes from the start of game time.

### **2.6 Dead Ball**

**2.6.1 Dead Ball Limit:** A two (2) hour dead ball limit applies. If the time of game reaches 2 hours and the final inning is not completed, Dead Ball rule is in effect.

**2.6.2** If dead ball time occurs during an at-bat, the batter shall complete the at-bat.

### **2.6.3 At the time of Dead Ball, rules deem:**

- If the visitor team is batting, the final score reverts to the previous completed inning.
- If the home team is batting and the visiting team has the lead, the final score reverts to the previous inning.
- If the home team is batting and the game is tied, the final score shall be recorded as a tie.

**2.7** In the final inning, the visiting team may forfeit remaining outs to attempt to complete the inning.

**2.8** An umpire may also call dead ball due to weather, darkness, or other unsafe conditions.

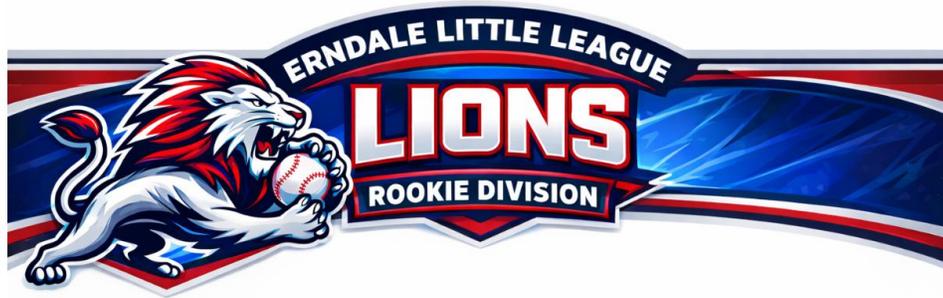
*Please see the revised Dead Ball ruling as it relates to league playoffs.*

**2.9 Game Scores & Official Status:** Each team shall keep score and provide the opposing scorekeeper with its batting order. The home team scorekeeper shall be the official scorekeeper in the event of a dispute.

**2.10** A minimum of three (3) complete innings must be played for a game to be considered official. If fewer innings are played, the game shall be recorded as a tie.

**2.11 Dugout Assignment:** The home team shall occupy the third-base side bench. The visiting team shall occupy the first-base side bench.

**2.12 Curfew Adjustments:** Curfew times and procedures may be adjusted by the VP of Baseball. Any changes shall be communicated to both coaches prior to the start of the game.



#### **4. TEAM REGULATIONS**

**4.1 Team Formation:** Teams shall be determined by the VP of Baseball, Division Convenor, and coaches through a draft process prior to the season. Every effort shall be made to balance teams by skill level. Player movement after the season begins may occur to maintain competitive balance. The VP of Baseball has final authority.

**4.2 Roster Size:** Teams must carry a minimum of nine (9) and a maximum of twelve (12) players. Adjustments to this requirement may be made at the sole discretion of the League Vice President.

**4.3 Late Registrations:** Players registering late shall be assigned to a team by the Division Convenor in consultation with head coaches.

**4.4 Call-Ups:** All call-ups must be coordinated through the Division Convenor. Coaches are not permitted to arrange call-ups independently.

---

#### **5. TEAM MANAGERS & COACHES**

**5.1 Conduct Responsibility:** Team Managers and Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and spectators before, during, and after games.

**5.2 Score Reporting:** The home team Manager/Coach shall report game scores in TeamSnap within twenty-four (24) hours of game completion.

**5.3 Scorekeepers:** Head Coaches shall appoint scorekeepers for each game. Scorekeepers shall track batting order, outs and runs. The home team scorekeeper is official.

**5.4 Coaching Requirements:** All Coaches must have a completed Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) and must wear the Erindale red coaching shirt and grey hat while on the field at first or third base. League or parent helpers may assist in dugouts or bullpens at the discretion of the Head Coach.

##### **5.5 General Rules for Coaches:**

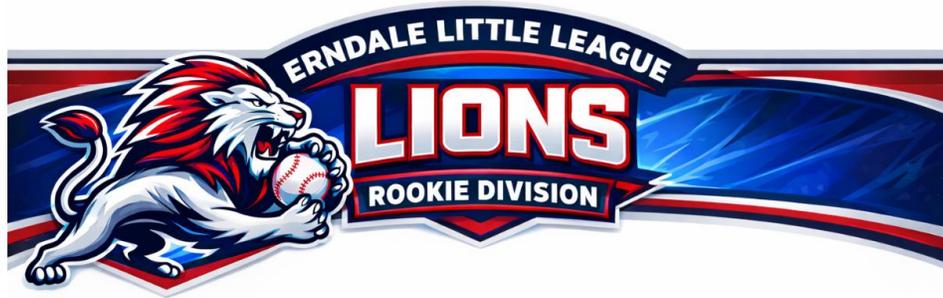
**5.5.1** No team shall have more than 4 uniformed coaches.

**5.5.2** At least one coach, volunteer or parent helper must always remain in the dugout.

**5.5.3** Defense: On defense, coaches must stay inside the dugout/bench area, except for specific permitted situations like umpire conferences.

**5.5.4** Offense (Batting): Two coaches occupy the first and third base coach's boxes. All other coaches must stay inside the dugout/bench area unless operating the pitching machine.

**5.5.5 Pitching Machine Operator:** At no time may the pitching machine operator give instruction to the batter. Failure to comply will result in a warning; any subsequent violation will result in the operator being removed from the pitching machine position. Another coach or volunteer must be selected as a replacement or the game will be forfeited.



**5.5.6 Field Presence:** Coaches cannot leave the bench/dugout for unauthorized reasons during a live ball; they must get umpire permission.

---

## **6. FIELD SET UP / HOME TEAM & VISITOR RESPONSIBILITIES / GAME DUTIES**

**6.1 Field Setup:** The VISITOR team shall ensure bases are properly installed at least ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled start time.

**6.2 Pitching Machine Setup** (*Please see: [12 Pitching Machine – Setup & Safety](#)*)

The HOME team shall ensure the tee, pitching machine, related battery, game balls, and two (2) buckets are brought to the field of play from the S1 clubhouse and set up at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled start time.

**6.3 Pitching Machine Takedown and Storage:** The HOME team shall ensure the pitching machine is brought back to the S1 clubhouse from the field of play. Only if the battery level is 15% or below, the HOME team will plug in to charge.

**6.4** If the pitching machine's battery does not have sufficient charge to operate the machine, the tee will be used for the entire or remainder of the game.

---

## **7. PLAYING FIELD DIMENSIONS**

**7.1 Base Paths:** Base paths shall be sixty (60) feet.

**7.2 Pitching Machine Distance:** The pitching machine shall be placed forty-three (43) to forty-six (46) feet from the back point of home plate.

## **8. EQUIPMENT**

**8.1 Uniforms:** Players must wear the league-issued uniform (hat, shirt, pants). Shirts must be tucked in, hats bill forward. Shorts are prohibited.

**8.2 Protective Cups:** All players must wear protective athletic cups.

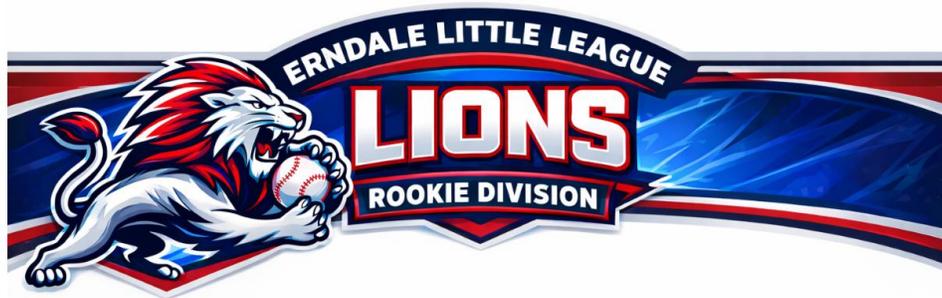
**8.3 Footwear:** Metal cleats are prohibited. Molded rubber cleats or running shoes are permitted.

**8.4 Catcher's Equipment:** Catchers must wear full catcher's gear during games and warm-ups.

**8.5 Approved Bats:** Only USA Baseball (USABat) approved bats are permitted. USSSA and BBCOR bats are prohibited.

**8.6 Illegal Bat Penalties:** Use of a non-approved bat results in a dead ball, the batter being called out, and runners returning. A second offense in the same game results in the Head Coach being ejected.

**8.7 Mandatory Pitchers Helmet:** The player in the pitcher position must wear a regulation batting helmet with face mask.



## 9. SPORTSMANSHIP & EJECTIONS

### 9.1 Sportsmanlike Conduct

All participants and spectators must conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner.

**9.2 Altercations:** Any person leaving their position to participate in an altercation shall be ejected and may face suspension.

**9.3 Ejected Individuals:** Any ejected person must immediately leave the vicinity of the playing field for the remainder of the game.

**9.4 Related Spectators:** If a related spectator is ejected, the Head Coach of that team shall also be ejected for that game only.

**9.5 Forfeiture:** Teams may be forced to forfeit games or be removed from the league if necessary.

**9.6 Suspension Policy:** Any manager, coach, or player ejected shall be suspended for the next physically played game. A second ejection requires a Board hearing.

---

## RULES OF PLAY – ROOKIEBALL DIVISION

### 10. DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENT & ROSTER

**10.1** Teams shall field ten (10) defensive players whenever possible: pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, third base, shortstop, left field, left-centre field, right-centre field, and right field.

**10.2** Teams with eight (8) or nine (9) players present are required to place players at all infield positions.

### 11. SEASON PROGRESSION (TEE TO MACHINE TRANSITION)

**11.1 May & June:** The first inning shall be played using a tee. All subsequent innings shall be played with the pitching machine.

**11.2 July & August** All innings shall be played with the pitching machine.

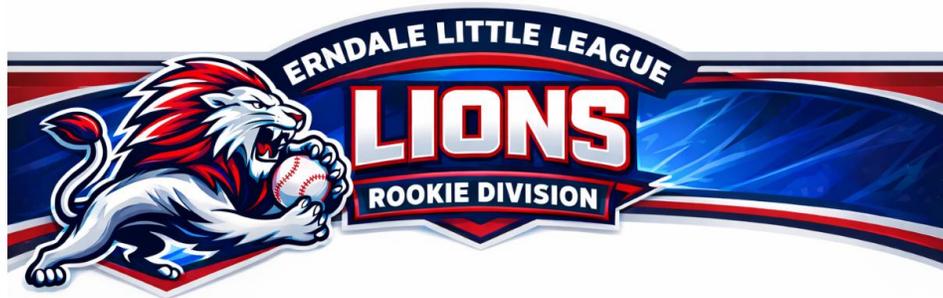
---

### 12. PITCHING MACHINE – SETUP & SAFETY

**12.1** The pitching machine shall be placed forty-three (43) to forty-six (46) feet from the back point of home plate.

**12.2** A safety circle approximately eight (8) feet in diameter shall surround the machine, or the mound area shall be used.

**12.3** The pitching machine shall be set at a speed between thirty (30) and thirty-five (35) miles per hour.



**12.4** The machine shall be set only at the start of each inning unless the umpire deems adjustment necessary. Any adjustment shall be made by the umpire in consultation with both Head Coaches. The umpire's decision is final.

**12.5** A coach or available volunteer shall operate the machine. To maintain pace of play, the operator shall not provide coaching or instruction during live play.

**12.6** In the event the pitching machine battery is insufficiently charged, the game or the remainder of the game will be played with the tee.

---

### **13. SAFETY CIRCLE RULES**

**13.1** If a batted ball hits the machine or stops in the circle: dead ball; batter awarded first base; forced runners advance only.

**13.2** If a batted ball passes through the circle without touching the machine, operator, or bucket: live ball.

**13.3** If a batted ball is touched or stopped in the circle by a defensive player: dead ball; all runners advance one base, and the batter is awarded first.

**13.4** If a batted ball hits the coach or volunteer operating the machine: coach interference; batter is out; all runners return to their base.

**13.5** Defensive players may not enter the safety circle to retrieve a ball.

**13.6** The chalk or line is part of the circle.

**13.7** Any outs recorded or bases advanced before the ball enters the safety circle shall stand.

---

### **14. HITTING FROM THE TEE**

**14.1** The batter receives three (3) attempts to strike the baseball past the fair play line.

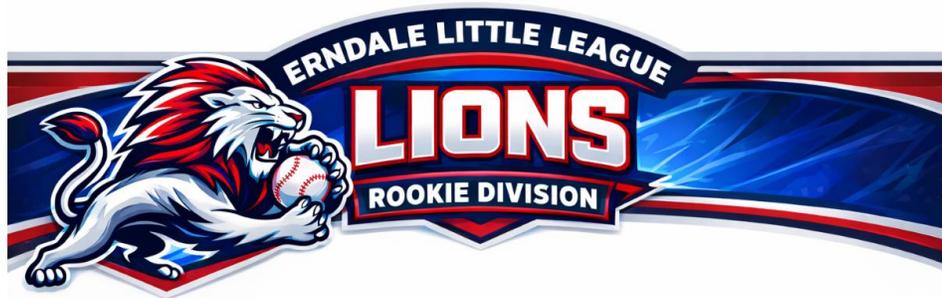
**14.2** If no fair, playable ball is hit on the third strike attempt, the batter is declared out.

**14.3** A playable ball is one that, in the umpire's judgment, would remain fair and reach the fair play line.

### **15. HITTING FROM PITCHING MACHINE**

**15.1 Hittable Pitch Limit:** Each batter is allowed up to five (5) hittable pitches, as determined by the umpire. If the batter fails to put the ball in play after five hittable pitches, they shall be declared out. However, if the fifth hittable pitch results in a foul ball, the batter is granted one additional pitch. This continues until the batter either puts the ball in play or is out by a swing and miss.

**15.2** A pitch over the batter's head or in the dirt shall be ruled a no-pitch unless the batter swings. No-pitches do not count toward the five (5) pitch limit.



15.4 The umpire shall announce any no-pitch immediately upon delivery.

15.5 The umpire shall announce the final pitch prior to it being delivered

---

## 16. BATTING ORDER & OFFENSIVE STRUCTURE

16.1 All players present shall be placed in one continuous batting order.

16.2 Each offensive inning, all players shall bat at least once. If teams have unequal roster sizes, the team with fewer players shall bat additional players to equalize total plate appearances. The batting order continues from where the previous inning ended.

16.3 Any player not ready to bat when called shall be declared out.

16.4 No mercy rule shall be in effect; both teams shall complete their full offensive inning.

---

## 17. BASERUNNING & LIVE BALL RULES

17.1 Runners may not leave their base until the ball is contacted by the batter. Each team shall receive one warning per game; subsequent violations result in the runner being declared out.

17.2 There shall be no stealing of bases. No advancement is permitted on wild pitches, passed balls, or on any ball returned to the pitcher or machine area.

**17.3 Overthrows:** On any play attempted at a base where an overthrow occurs, the ball is immediately dead and no runners may advance.

**17.4 Time / Dead Ball:** Time shall be granted after the completion or attempted completion of a play. Any infielder with possession of the ball, both feet in the infield and in fair territory, may call time by holding the ball overhead. Runners less than halfway shall return; runners more than halfway shall be awarded the next base.

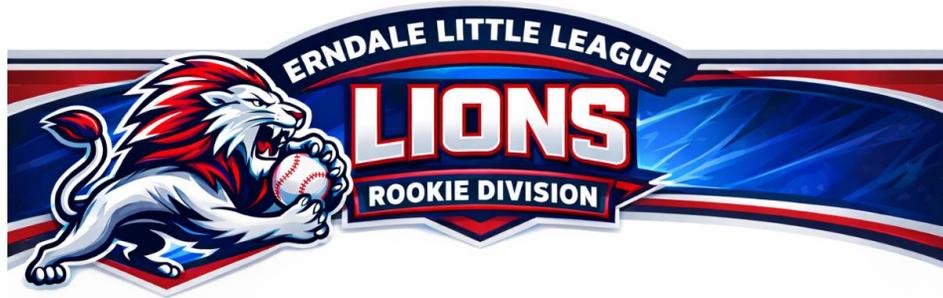
**17.5 Last Batter Rule:** On the final batter of the inning, the inning ends when the batter scores or the batter is forced out at home plate. Only the catcher may record a force out at home plate. The batting team shall inform the umpire of the last batter, and the umpire shall announce "last batter" to the defensive team.

---

## 18. DEFENSIVE RULES

**18.1 Defensive Pitcher:** The defensive pitcher shall stand outside the safety circle, even with the release point of the pitching machine, with one foot in contact with the edge of the circle. The pitcher must wear a league-approved helmet and may move once the ball exits the machine but shall not enter the circle.

**18.2 Catcher:** The catcher must wear full protective equipment and set up in the normal catcher's position, attempting to catch the pitch.



**18.3 Outfielders:** All outfielders must have both feet on the grass until the ball is contacted. Outfielders may not be granted time by holding the ball overhead.

**18.4** The Infield Fly Rule does not apply.

---

## **19. EQUIPMENT & SAFETY**

**19.1** No bunting is permitted.

**19.2 Bat Throwing:** Batters must drop the bat after contact and not throw it. Each team receives one warning per game. Subsequent infractions result in the batter being declared out, the ball being dead, and all runners returning.

### **19.3 Ball Management**

A bucket of game balls shall be placed at the pitching machine, with an empty bucket behind home plate. The catcher and umpire shall place caught balls in the bucket. A coach from the DEFENSIVE team must retrieve missed balls. Balls shall be returned to the machine operator in a manner that minimally interferes with pace of play.

## **20. EQUITABLE PLAY RULES (STRICTLY ENFORCED)**

### **20.1 Batting:**

Over the course of each month, coaches shall attempt to ensure players receive approximately equal plate appearances.

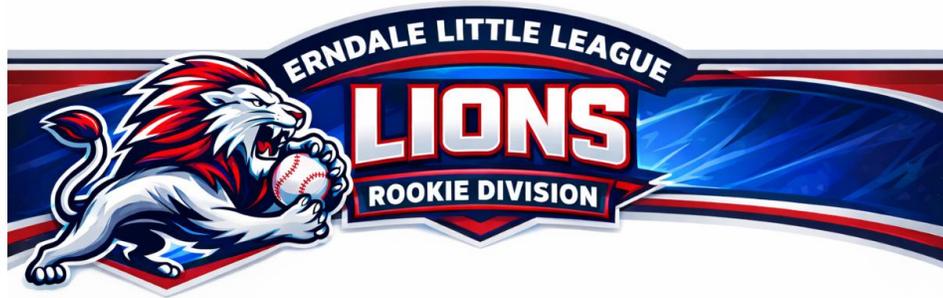
### **20.2 Fielding:**

All players must rotate between infield and outfield positions. Every player must play at least one of the first three innings in the infield.

**20.3 Mandatory Mid-Inning Defensive Rotation:** To ensure balanced playing time and to keep players engaged, the Erndale Rookie Division will use a mid-inning defensive rotation.

**20.3.1 Mid-Inning Rotation:** Upon announcement from the batting team that they have reached their batting order midpoint, bench players will enter the game as outfielders, outfielders will rotate to the infield, and infielders will rotate to the bench. If no players are on the bench, only outfielders and infielder's switch. Coaches are required to assign specific positions fairly and are obligated to move players in such a way that all players get equal opportunity to play both infield and outfield positions.

**20.3.2 Catcher position:** Catcher will remain for the duration of the inning.



**20.3.3 Inning Status During Player Rotation:** A mid-inning rotation is considered a continuation of the current inning and will not be treated as the start of a new inning.

*Note: This rotation helps develop players' skills by exposing them to different positions. Coaches from both teams should track batters and cooperate to ensure rotations are done in good faith. Umpires will report repeated missed rotations to division convenors.*

**20.4 Sitting Out:**

No player may sit out a second defensive inning until all players have sat out once.

**20.5 Catcher Position:**

If insufficient players volunteer to catch, all capable players shall share the position equally.

**20.6 Defensive Positioning:**

No player may play the same defensive position more than twice or two innings per game.

**Rookie Ball Division Playoff Rules:**

**21. Playoff Format**

**21.1 Playoff Structure:** Playoffs are a double knockout format until the Championship game.

**21.2 Championship Game:** The Championship is a one-game, winner-take-all final.

**21.3 Seeding:** Seeding for playoffs is based on regular season standings.

**21.4 Tie-Breaking Procedures**

If two or more teams are tied in the standings, the following criteria shall be applied to determine seeding:

**21.4.1 Head-to-Head Record:** The team with the better win-loss record in games played among the tied teams shall receive the higher seed.

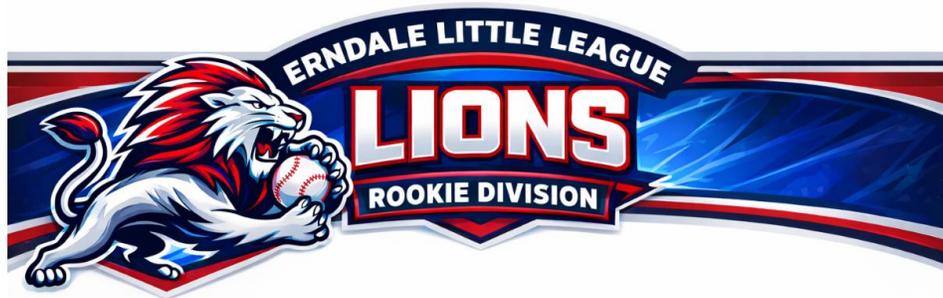
**21.4.2 Run Differential:** The team with the higher total run differential (runs scored minus runs allowed) in games among the tied teams shall receive the higher seed.

**21.4.3 Runs Allowed:** The team allowing fewer runs in games among the tied teams shall receive the higher seed.

**21.4.4 Coin Toss:** If teams remain tied after applying the above criteria, a coin toss or random draw shall determine the higher seed.

**22. Home Team Designation:** For all playoff games except the Championship, the higher-seeded team based on league play is the home team.

•For Championship games, the home team is determined by coin toss.



### **23 Playoff Time Limits, Dead Ball, and Suspended Games**

**23.1** No new inning shall start after one (1) hour and forty-five (45) minutes from the scheduled start time, unless the playoff game is tied. A new inning is deemed to have started immediately upon completion of the previous inning.

**23.2** Once a new inning has started, that inning must be completed and the game shall continue until a winner is declared.

**23.3** When a game is tied, any new inning that starts after the 2-hour dead ball mark, the extra runner rule is in effect, placing the last batter of the previous inning on second base to start each extra inning.

**23.4** If an umpire declares a dead ball due to weather, darkness, or other unsafe conditions, the game shall be suspended and resumed later or immediately on another field, subject to field availability.

**23.5** Rescheduled game dates and times shall be determined by the league scheduler and the VP of baseball based on field availability, not player availability.

**23.6** Previous batting and fielding orders must continue exactly as if the game never stopped.

**23.7** Call-ups may be used to replace players in the lineup who are unable to attend, replacing missing players starting from the top of the batting order and proceeding down the lineup.

**23.8** If a position in the batting order cannot be filled, the batting order shall move up by one spot, from the bottom to the top, maintaining the same batting sequence.

**23.9** Eight (8) players are required for a playoff game or the team forfeits.