

Pitch Count Regulation

Goal:

The goal of the new pitch count rule is simple – **safety** – to protect kid's arms. When in doubt, refer back to this goal.

LL Pitch Count regulation

Note: This rule ONLY applies to baseball. There is no pitch count rule for Softball.

The following is a summary of the new regular season Pitch Count Regulation for players league age 12 and below. To read the full text of the regulation, including league age 13 and above and the International Tournament rules, refer to LL's "Pitch Count Publication" at: http://www.littleleague.org/media/Pitch_Count_Publication.pdf

Pitch Count Rules Summary:

- 1) Any player on a regular season team may pitch.
 - a) Exception: 12 yr olds may not pitch in Minors
- 2) There is no limit to the number of pitchers a team may use in a game.
- 3) There is no limit to the number 12 yr olds who may pitch in a game or given week.
- 4) There are no "inning" or "calendar week" limits of any kind.
- 5) Warm-up pitches do not count. Only pitches that would be recorded in the scorebook count.
- 6) Other throws that the pitcher makes are not counted – only pitches to a batter count (except pitches declared "no pitch" by the umpire)
- 7) A player may not pitch in more than one game per day. This includes scheduled double-headers, resumption of a suspended game and make up games.
- 8) The manager must remove the pitcher when said pitcher reaches the limit for his/her age group as noted below, but the pitcher may remain in the game at another position:

League Age 11-12:	85 pitches per day
League Age 10 and under:	75 pitches per day

Exception: If a pitcher reaches the limit for his/her league age while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until that batter reaches base or is put out.

9) Pitchers (league age 16 and under) must adhere to the following rest requirements:

Pitches	Days Rest	Example
61+	3 calendar days	72 pitches on Monday, next available day is Friday
41 to 60	2 calendar days	50 pitches on Monday, next available day is Thursday
21 to 40	1 calendar day	40 pitches on Monday, next available day is Wednesday
1 to 20	0 calendar days	18 pitches on Monday, next available day is Tuesday

10) The official pitch counter will be the official scorekeeper for that game, the home book.

11) Both managers will be notified who the official pitch counter is before the game begins.

12) The official pitch counter will inform the umpire when a pitcher has reached the maximum pitch count, remembering that if that pitcher reaches 75 or 85 while during a batter they are allowed to complete that batter. The ump will be notified at the completion of that batter. The ump then informs the Manager that s/he must change pitchers. This is the only time the umpire is involved. In addition it is highly recommended that both managers are notified when a pitcher is within 5 pitches of the 75 or 85 pitch count limits.

13) The pitch counter must provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either manager or umpire. However, the manager is responsible for knowing when his/her pitcher must be removed.

NSLL League Rules:

- 1) **Pitch Count Disagreement policy** - If there is a disagreement between managers as to the number of pitches thrown by a pitcher, and it cannot be resolved by looking at the official book; the manager reporting the lower number of pitches will prevail.
- 2) **Publish game summaries** - The game pitch count totals will be reported online with the game score by the home team Manager. The data will then be used to create reports where each manager can not only view their pitchers availability, but also the availability of players on other teams. The posted game summary will indicate the number of pitches pitched in the game and the date when the pitcher is available to pitch again following the mandated number of rest days.
- 3) **Be sure both managers know who is eligible to pitch (or not) before the game starts** - In the pre-game meeting between Managers and Umpires, pitcher eligibility for that game should be discussed. Each Manager should be prepared with pitching eligibility information for his/her team. The Umpire will coordinate the exchange of this information, but will not monitor pitchers or pitch counts during the game until informed by the official pitch counter that a pitcher has reached the maximum pitch count.
- 4) **Pitching Violation policy** - Exceeding the maximum pitch count in a game is a Pitching Violation and is charged to the responsible Manager. League standard punishment for Manager rule violations shall apply:
 - a) First offense, manager receives a warning from the president,
 - b) Second offense, manager is suspended for 1 game
 - c) Third offense, manager is suspended for remainder of season
- 5) **Intentional walks** –The new intentional walk rule is that a batter is sent to first base and no pitches are counted. The problem with this rule is that there is no “cost” to the defensive team. A savvy coach can walk the other team’s best hitter every time first base is open with no downside. Based on input from leagues that ran the test program last year NSLL will amend this rule for league play, requiring pitchers to throw the ball to the plate rather than allowing an intentional walk without having to throw the ball. Our reasoning is as follows:
 - a) Anything can happen when a pitch is thrown – a pass ball, throwing it over the plate where the batter can hit it, etc.
 - b) A typical LL player gets just 50-60 at bats in a season. Taking the bat out of his hands every time he comes to the plate robs that player of the opportunity hit the ball, let alone get the big hit that wins a game.

The purpose of this rule is not to eliminate your choice as a manager whether to intentionally walk a kid, it simply requires you to throw four pitches to the batter in order to do so.

- 6) **Pitch count break points** - The intent of the pitch count is to protect kids arms from overuse, with that in mind NSLL is adopting a league rule that will allow managers to work within the spirit of the rule without excessive game stoppage and slowdown. When a pitcher is approaching one of the days rest break-points (20, 40 and 60 pitches) the defensive manager is allowed to call time and inform the umpire and other manager that the pitcher is throwing to his last batter. The pitcher is then allowed to finish pitching to the batter with the pitch count stopped at the break-point. The manager must then remove the pitcher when the batter has completed his at bat, whether the break point has been reached or not. This rule keeps the game going by minimizing pitching changes in the middle of at bats and quells any arguments over whether a pitcher threw a pitch or two over the break point. It is also consistent with the LL rule regarding last batter when the maximum number of pitches is reached.

Examples: Team A has a pitcher in the game and at the 35th pitch manager A steps out and notifies the umpire and the other manager that this is his current pitchers last hitter. The pitcher proceeds to pitch to the batter and on the third pitch the hitter singles to right. The pitcher is then removed and is recorded with 38 total pitches.

Team B has a pitcher who has thrown 55 pitches, and manger B announces that this is his last hitter. In this at bat the hitter continues to foul off pitches until they finally get a 9 pitch walk. The pitcher of record is then removed from the game and is recorded with 60 pitches rather than the 64 actually thrown because the manager made his intent know prior to the start of that at bat.

Team C has a pitcher who has thrown 14 pitches, after the pitcher has thrown 4 pitches to the next batter the manager steps out of the dugout and notifies both teams that this is his pitchers last at bat. The at bat goes a total of 7 pitches. Since the manager did not announce his intent prior to the start of the at bat, that pitcher is recorded with 21 pitches and at that point the manager has the option to remove the pitcher or leave them in the game.

Other resources:

LL Pitch Count resource page:

http://www.littleleague.org/media/Pitch_Count_Resource_Page.asp

General Pitch Count Q & A:

http://www.littleleague.org/media/pitch_count_QA.asp