

2026

LDOT RULES (last updated 7/25/2026)

First established July 1, 2000 (Amended in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 7/15/2026)

Rule #1: Two plates and two bases at first base:

1. There will be one original home plate for the batter and catcher.
2. There will be a second "runner's plate" for all base runners.
All plays at home plate will continue to be a force out. There will be **NO** tag plays at home plate.
- 2a. Any runner, based on umpire's discretion, intentionally/deliberately initiating contact with catcher/fielder at home plate, whether via slide or running into the catcher/fielder, will be declared out and may be subject to ejection. **If ejected, the runner will also be suspended for the next game.**
- 2b. If the catcher/fielder, based on umpire's discretion, intentionally/deliberately initiates contact with a base runner going to "runner's plate" the base runner will be declared safe and the catcher/fielder may be subject to ejection. **If ejected, the catcher/fielder will also be suspended for the next game.**
3. A "runner's line" will continue to be used.
 - a. The "runner's line" is a chalk line located 25 feet from the "runner's plate" (across from last padded post on visitor's side of backstop) and perpendicular to the 3rd base foul line. It should be visible to all runners standing on 3rd base.
 - b. Runners coming from 3rd base may return to 3rd base if they have not touched or crossed the "runner's line".
 - 1) Runners are safe if they touch the "runner's plate" before any defensive player has the ball in his possession at "home plate".
 - 2) Runners are out if the ball is in a defensive player's possession at "home plate" before the runner touches the "runner's plate".
 - 3) All plays at home are force outs. No tag outs or aggressive plays are allowed at the plate. Catchers or any other defensive player must only record outs at the original "home plate".
 - 4) Catchers/defensive players are not permitted to block the runner from touching the "runner's plate". Should this occur, the runner is awarded the run.
4. There will be two bases at first base to avoid collisions. A runner going to first on a ground ball must use the outside base (in foul territory). The fielder will use the regular first base when trying to record the out.

NOTE: **Exception:** if a throw takes the defensive fielder to the outside base (in foul territory), the runner is permitted to run to the regular first base to avoid collision.

Rule #2: Base Advancements:

1. Teams may advance up to 2 bases each inning as a result of a pass ball, wild pitch or steal with one exception:
Exception: A catcher missing a pitched 3rd strike, **only when there are 2 outs**, shall be charged an error (not a passed ball). The batter and runner may risk advancement as a result of the error. **With less than two outs, regular advancement rules apply.**
2. Pinch-runners **ARE** permitted to steal/advance.
3. When a 3rd advance takes place during a "double steal", the trailing runner will be declared out.
Example 1: 1st and 2nd occupied; one advance remaining. Pitch is made and both runners attempt to advance. Throw is made to 3rd but lead runner beats throw (no error). Trailing runner reaches 2nd base. He is declared out at the moment he touches 2nd base.

Example 2: 1st and 2nd occupied; one advance remaining. Pitch is made and both runners attempt to advance. Lead runner advancing to 3rd is thrown out by catcher. The trailing runner reaches 2nd base; he is **not** declared out as lead runner being put out at 3rd base does not constitute an advance.

Exception to rule: If 1st and 3rd bases are occupied and a 3rd advance takes place, via the runner on 3rd base trying to advance home on the throw to second, the **lead** runner will be declared out if there was no error on the play at 2nd base. Runner trying for home **must** pass "point of no return" line to be called out.

Rule #3: Pitching Rules:

1. Pitchers who have **previously played** in the league, regardless of age, and with a pitcher rating of 3 or below may throw unlimited innings each game. These pitchers may leave a game as a pitcher and return 1 time during that game.
 - a. New pitchers with a pitcher rating of 3 and below are subject to the age restriction previously used:

38-42	3 consecutive outs (can carry over to next inning)
43-45	2 innings (one pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched)
46-49	3 innings (one pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched)
50-59	4 innings (one pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched)
60+	4 innings (one pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched)

NOTE: New pitchers are not permitted to leave a game as a pitcher and return to pitch in that game.
2. Pitchers who have **previously played** in the league, regardless of age, and with a pitcher rating of 4 or above may throw a maximum of 4 innings a game subject to a team maximum of 4 innings per game.
 - a. New pitchers with a pitcher rating of 3.5 and above are subject to the age restriction previously used as well as the team pitching limitation of 4 maximum innings of high-rated pitching:

38-42	3 consecutive outs (can carry over to next inning)
43-45	2 innings (one pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched)
46-49	3 innings (one pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched)
50-59	4 innings (one pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched)
60+	4 innings (one pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched)

NOTE: No pitcher, whether established or new, with a pitcher rating of 3.5 and above is permitted to leave a game as a pitcher and return to pitch again in that game.

NOTE: *The league will furnish a listing which indicates the pitching limitations of all established and new pitchers. It will also include any new players who are not identified as pitchers and their respective limitations should they pitch in a game.*

Any established player not included on the Pitching Limitation listing will be considered 3 rated or below as a pitcher if their overall rating is 6 or below and may pitch unlimited innings. Any established player not included on the Pitching Limitation listing will be considered high-rated as a pitcher if their overall rating is 6.5-10 and may only pitch up to 4 innings subject to the team maximum of 4 innings.

NOTE: *More than one pitcher age 38-42 may be used in a game.*

3. Managers may announce an intentional walk to the umpire and the batter automatically takes first base. The pitcher does not have to throw four balls to complete an intentional walk.
4. For NEW pitchers, a pitcher's age as of December 31 of the current year determines how many innings he may pitch.

Example: Pitcher turns 46 on December 28. He is considered 46 for the entire season and can pitch 3 innings the entire season.
5. **More than 2 high rated pitchers can pitch in a game; however the maximum high-rated innings per team, per game is 4 innings.**

Starting pitchers and new pitchers entering the game will be permitted to throw 8 warm-up pitches the first inning they pitch and 5 warm-up pitches each subsequent inning.

The umpire may permit more pitches if the pitcher enters the game to pitch because of an injury.

Rule #4: Balks:

1. Balks will be called with the following exception: umpires have the discretion to charge a warning for the first offense.

Rule #5: Batting Rules:

1. A batter must remain in the same place in the batting order for the entire game.
 - a. Late arrivals are inserted at the end of the order as they arrive.
2. When the lineup is turned in, the scorekeeper must be notified of any player who wishes to only play the field and not bat. This is permissible for "medical" reasons only. That player may then only play the field and may not be inserted into the batting lineup later in the game.
3. An injured player removed after the game has started must be announced to the scorekeeper and to the opposing manager with no further penalty being assessed. Once announced, an injured player may not return to the lineup or play the field.
4. **A player may leave a game for work/appointment/family matter without a penalty being imposed each time that player's spot comes up in the order. No out will be recorded. Players voluntarily leaving a game (not for reasons above) will be subject to penalty when their spot in the order comes up. An out will be reflected each time.**
5. No player may pass an at bat without penalty; if they do, one out will be recorded for each pass.
6. If a player is ejected from a game an out will be declared each time his spot comes up in the batting order for the remainder of the game.
7. Teams no longer are required to bat oldest to youngest for the first game of the season.

Rule #6: Pinch-Running Rules:

1. Each player is permitted to pinch-run only once per game.
2. Pinch-runners **ARE** permitted to steal or advance on a passed ball or wild pitch.
3. **NEW 2024!!** A courtesy runner may run for the catcher and/or pitcher when there are two outs without counting against the pinch running limitation. The runner will be the last batted out.
NOTE: A team may use a pinch-runner in this instance, if they so choose; however, this will count as that player's one opportunity to pinch run in the game.
4. A pinch-runner may run for another pinch-runner on base but that will count as his one opportunity to pinch run in the game.
5. In the event the last remaining pinch-runner a team has is on base and his spot comes up in the batting order the original runner he is running for must return to base. If he cannot, due to injury/illness, managers must mutually agree on who may go into game to run. Once that inning is completed the team will not be permitted to pinch run for remainder of the game. They can continue to utilize the courtesy runner for catcher/pitcher under #3 above.
6. Both managers are responsible for keeping track of each other's pinch-runners as well as their own. When a pinch-runner is inserted his name/number will be announced to the other manager, announcer and umpires. In the case of a dispute as to whether a player has already pinch run, the announcer will have 3rd and final say. In the absence of an announcer the umpire has 3rd and final say.

PENALTY: If a player attempts to pinch run a 2nd time in a game (does not include being a courtesy runner for the catcher/pitcher - #3 above) he will be called out as soon as he steps on the base to pinch run. **He will not be ejected from the game or suspended for the next game.**

NEW 2026 7. Any player ejected from a game for aguing balls/strikes/base calls MAY not be suspended for the next game subject to the umpire's discretion.
Any player ejected for throwing equipment, verbal abuse/swearing, fighting, initiating intentional contact with an umpire or other player will result in immediate suspension from the next game and possible season suspension depending on the severity of the act.

Rule #7: Base-Running Rule:

1. The "dead duck" rule is in effect at all bases, which means:
 - a. A runner must concede the out if he is over 10 feet from a base, cannot return to another base, and the fielder has the ball in his glove preparing to make the tag.

Rule #8: Official League Games:

1. Unlimited defensive substitutions are permitted during a game.
2. League equipment:
 - a. Baseballs and bats will be supplied by the league for those who do not have their own.
 - 1) Only wooden bats approved by the league can be used in league games.
 - 2) Composite bats are allowed in league games effective with 2012 season!!
 - b. Metal cleats are permitted for 2024 as the teener has re-instated players wearing metal cleats. Metal bats are still prohibited at all times.
3. Official league games will be 7 innings in length unless:
 - a. A **regular season** game is officially called off by the umpire after 5 full innings have been completed (4 1/2 innings if the home team is winning), or
 - b. If a regular season game remains tied after 9 full innings, the game is official with each team awarded 1/2 win and 1/2 loss.
4. Postponed games:
 - a. Games postponed for any reason (including rain) before 5 full innings (4 1/2 if home team is winning) will be re-scheduled and replayed from the point of postponement at a date to be determined by the league officials. **This rule only applies to regular season games.**
 - b. Playoff games postponed for any reason (including rain) before 7 full innings are played will resume at point of postponement. Should team losing at point of postponement not wish to continue game will be declared final.
 - c. **For regular season games only:** There will be a 2 1/2 hour time limit on all regular season games. If the time limit is reached during an inning that inning must be completed.

The next inning is considered started as soon as the third out is recorded in the bottom of the previous inning as long as the time has not reached 2 hours, 30 mins.

NEW 2026! Regular season games only! Should a team be winning by 12 or more runs after 5 innings (4 1/2 if the home team is winning) the game will be called at that point or any subsequent point. The home team must bat if they are losing.

NOTE: The time limit does not pertain to **playoff** games in which all 7 innings must be completed.

- d. For extra innings: a runner will be placed at 2nd base to start each extra inning. The runner placed at 2nd base will be the last batter the inning before unless a base runner is the last out without the ball being hit (caught stealing, etc).
- d1. A team may replace the runner in "d." above with a pinch-runner as long as the player pinch-running has not used his one opportunity to pinch run in the game (see Rule #6, Item 4 penalty if player pinch running has already pinch run once in the game). **Rules 4c-4d1 only apply to regular season games.**

Rule #9: Player Distribution (unequal number of players):

1. Both team managers must have their written line-ups in to the scorekeeper 5 minutes prior to the start of each game.
 - a. A player must physically be at the field to officially be in the line-up.
 - b. Failure to submit a written line-up on time will result in the team being forced to bat oldest to youngest for the game.
 - c. Scorekeepers will make a warning announcement 10 minutes prior to the start of the each game to remind the managers that the lineups are due.

Rule #10: Forfeiture Rules:

1. Effective with 2014 season, a team may start a game with 8 players. The team will be given a 20 minute grace period starting from the time that the game was to start if at least 8 players are not at the field. If the team does not have 8 players within the 20 minute grace period then that team must forfeit the game.
2. A team which has started the game with 8 or more players, **MUST** finish with at least 8 players.

NEW 2026!!3. A team with less than 9 players for a given game may pick up 1 or 2 players (rated 5 or lower) to get to 9 players in order to play their game that day.

- a. If a team has 8 players they may pick up only 1 to get to 9 for that game.
- b. If a team has 6 or 7 players they may pick up 2, but no more to get to 8 or 9 players respectively for that particular game.
- c. If a team starts with 8 players, an out will NOT be recorded when the 9th spot in the batting order comes up.

Those players picked up may not be first year players, are not permitted to pitch and must bat at the end of the batting order.

Should one or more of the team's regular members show up during the game they will be placed at the bottom of the order. The player(s) previously picked up will remain in the game unless they choose to leave the game. If they choose to leave the game there will be no penalty imposed (out will NOT be recorded when their spot comes up in the order).

NEW 2026! FORFEITS!! Any team forfeiting a game will be subject to \$50 penalty if the forfeit is announced prior to the date of the game. If announced the day of the game, the penalty will be \$100. Either fee must be paid prior to the team's next game or the team will forfeit that game as well.

Any team forfeiting a game the last week of the season will NOT be eligible for the playoffs!

Unless otherwise stated, all other major league rules apply to LDOT League.