

Majors Division Philosophy

This is the most competitive division of Little League baseball. Players pitch to hitters, utilizing pitch count limits according to age. All players are in the batting order and must play a minimum of 3 innings in the field. The majority of players in this division are 11 and 12 years old, along with 10-year-olds with advanced skills. All 12-year-olds that desire to play in the Majors division must be drafted onto a team.

Standings are kept and the season culminates with a postseason playoff tournament. Majors players are selected after the season to fill the 10, 11 and 12-year-old District All-Star Teams and the Majors Superbowl Team. The Majors Superbowl team is primarily made up of 12-year old players. Games and practices generally take place at District Fields. There is one weekday afternoon game and one weekend game, and also one weekday afternoon practice and one weekend practice.

Little League Rules, as set forth in the current calendar year's Little League Rule Book, are adhered to in Hillsborough Little League, and are not duplicated herein. Coaches should have a copy of the Little League Rules and apply them. We will adhere to Little League Rules unless modified herein by HLL Local Rules, which are approved by our local Board of Directors.

1. Player Selection System

HLL chooses Tryout Plan B of the Little League Player Selection System as defined in the Resource Guide https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/position-policy-statements/local-league-draft-methods/.). In addition, HLL chooses the alternate method for Plan B, which allows for all eligible players to be picked from one pool with the requirement that all returning players and 12 year olds are chosen before the end of the draft. Managers' children will be slotted in the draft based on skill as determined by the Player Agent. The League secured a waiver from the D52 President for these adaptations to Plan B

Upon completion of the Draft, the Player Agent will permit trades. Trades in HLL must be completed on draft night and a time limit will be set. If a deal is made, it will be announced that night. No trades are permitted once the Player Agent ends the Draft.

2. Nine (9) Defensive Outs (Local Rule)

HLL requires all players to play a minimum of nine (9) defensive outs. HLL has historically adopted a more generous requirement for minimum play based on the philosophy of maximum participation by the players.

Therefore, every player must play a minimum of nine (9) defensive outs as opposed to six (6) defensive outs as required by **Rule 3.03**. However, the consequences for not adhering to this rule do not deviate.

HLL also recognizes that the official substitution rules were developed based on minimum play requirements of six (6) defensive outs and therefore HLL makes the following accommodations to the minimum play requirement:



- When the visiting team has 12 players participate in the game, Managers may play up to 3 players only six (6) defensive outs innings if the game is shortened due to loss. Those players who only played six (6) defensive outs, must, upon the next time the team is Visitor, start the game and play nine (9) consecutive defensive outs.
- The visiting team with 12 players may not use a player in the field only six defensive outs in a winning effort because there will be 6 innings of available field play;
- When the visiting team has fewer than 12 players, all players are required to receive a minimum play of nine (9) defensive outs, without exception.
- If any player does not receive the required nine (9) defensive outs, as a result of being on a losing visiting team, the player(s) who didn't receive the league mandated field time must start the next game and play at least the first three innings.

The visiting manager will be responsible for notifying the home team manager if he played 3 kids only 2 innings. The home team manager is ultimately responsible for verification and reporting. The home team manager will be responsible for reporting the kids' names who only received 2 innings of playing time (along with the score and pitch counts). The Division Director will notify the opponent of the kids who need to start and play 3 consecutive innings the very next game.

Violation of Rule (assuming a completed six (6) inning game)

- First offense: Manager will receive a written warning from the Board;
- Second offense: Manager will be suspended by the Board for one game;
- Third offense: Manager will be suspended by the Board for the season.

The ONLY exception to this rule is a disciplinary problem with a player. A Manager, after previously discussing the issue with the Player Agent and receiving concurrence, may reduce a player to 2 innings of play if there are consistent attitude, attendance, and/or unsportsmanlike conduct issues. In this situation, the Player Agent and the Manager must inform the opposing Manager and home plate umpire of the situation before the game begins.

3. Minimum of Nine Players

Games may not be played with fewer than 9 players. If, during the course of a game, the team with only 9 players loses a player for any reason, the game is forfeited.

- This rule will only apply to Regular Season and Post-Season play. HLL will allow Pre-Season games to be played with a minimum of 8 players on a team
- Little League "Rule 4.16: NOTE: A game may not be started with less than 9 players." It is not an automatic forfeit, as the Board can decide that the game can be played at a later time, but the Board cannot decide that a game can be played with less than 9.
- Little League "Rule 4.17: If a player becomes injured during the game and cannot play, and the team cannot field 9, then they forfeit."
- The score for any game decided by forfeit shall be recorded as a 1-0 win for the non-forfeiting team.



In the event of an 8 player team, HLL encourages the game to be played as a scrimmage, but the 8 player team would forfeit for the purposes of league standings.

4. Continuous Batting Order

Majors Division will play with a continuous batting order. This eliminates the availability of special pinch runners.

5. Dropped Third Strike

HLL chooses to adopt **Rule 6.09(b)**, whereby the batter becomes a runner when "the third strike called by the umpire is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two out."

6. Mercy Rule

As provided by **Rule 4.10(e)**, HLL will adopt a mercy rule for the Majors division. If there is a differential of ten (10) runs or more after four (4) innings of play [3.5 innings if the home team is ahead], the game is final. Teams may choose to continue to play out the remaining innings as a 'scrimmage,' but official scoring and pitcher pitch tracking will not continue after the game is official.

7. No Fake (or "slash") Bunt

A batter is out if he/she fakes a bunt and then takes a swing at the pitch.

8. One Foot in Batter's Box Rule

HLL adopts Rule 6.02(c) which requires the batter to keep one foot in the batter's box throughout the at bat. The batter will receive a warning for the first offense. A strike will be recorded against the batter (and a pitch added to the pitch total) for each additional offense. There are 8 exceptions to this rule: See Rule 6.02(c) in the Little League Rule book.

9. Banning of stealing of signs

HLL adopts Rule 9.01(d) which prohibits the stealing of pitch signs and location and relaying them to the batter. After one warning, the consequence is ejection.

10. Sportsmanship

In accordance with the HLL Player Contract, all Managers, Coaches, players, and spectators are to show good sportsmanship and proper conduct at all times. No one except a Manager is allowed to speak with the Umpires during a game. Arguing or attempting to influence umpire decisions (strikes and balls or any judgment call) is specifically prohibited and will not be tolerated. (See Section 16 below.)



11. Player Call-Ups

Permanent: If a team is required to replace a player on the Roster, as defined by **Regulation III(d)**, and the Board has approved the replacement, the team is required to call-up a player from the Minors Division. All permanent player call-ups must be completed by April 15; there are no permanent call-ups after April 15. (Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the HLL Board)

The Manager must first notify the Player Agent and Majors Division Director of their need for a permanent player call-up. The Player Agent will review all eligible players from the Minors division and select a pool of players for the Majors Manager to choose. An eligible call-up is any 10 or 11 year old who is eligible to be drafted into the Majors Division and NOT a Manager or Coaches' child, unless the Minors Manager or Coach agrees to complete the season without his son or daughter on the team. The pool of players shall consist of three to four players that fulfill the following intent.

The intent is that the call up will NOT disrupt the competitive balance in either Majors or Minors. With this in mind, the pool will be determined by including players that are similar in ability to the Majors player who left the majors team. It is understood that this may be difficult to achieve, but the Player Agent will be as diligent as possible to achieve the stated outcome. The Player Agent will submit the pool to the Competition Committee for review before giving the names to the affected Majors Manager. After the Majors Manager selects from the pool, the Player Agent notifies the Minors Manager and affected family. If the player's family does not want their child promoted to the Majors Division this season, then the family can request that their child not be called-up for the remainder of the season. If the family rejects a promotion, then the Majors Manager will select another player from the pool until the vacancy is filled.

Temporary Call-Up Program: In addition, in the case wherein a Majors team knows in advance that it will have less than the required nine (9) players in attendance for a game, the Board strongly encourages the team to arrange a call-up of a player from the Minors Division for that game. If a team is not able to field nine (9) players for a game, then the team forfeits the game. The Majors team may request as few or as many players required to reach the minimum of nine (9) to field a team or the maximum of twelve (12), the Roster size. Temporary player call-ups can occur throughout the entire season and playoffs.

The purpose of the Call-Up Program is threefold:

- 1) To ensure that games can be played at their scheduled time and date
- 2) To eliminate forfeits due to not have the required 9 players
- 3) To give the opportunity of playing a game at a higher level to a broad base of players

However, a call-up may not play the position of Pitcher or Catcher in the call-up game.

The process shall function as follows:

When a Manager needs to add one or more players to his roster for a single game due to absences of players from his formal roster, the manager (i) selects a replacement player from a "pool" of players from the Minors Division as determined by the Player Agent and the League President and (ii) contacts the family(ies) of replacement players to complete his single game day roster.



Once the pool of players is identified, the Player Agent will populate a spreadsheet that can be accessed via a link on the HLL website. The spreadsheet will have each player's name and contact information. The manager in need will access the spreadsheet and choose any player from the pool, provided the call-up does not conflict with a scheduled Minors game for that player. Once the manager confirms with the player's family that the player will play in a game, the manager will inform the Player Agent of the call-up, which will then be documented in the spreadsheet.

In the spirit of avoiding forfeits, the "parking lot call up" may only be used in extreme circumstances. For example, if a team is at the field for a regularly scheduled game and does not have at least 9 players, and the manager has not been able to secure a 9th player using the call-up process described above, the team may suit up and play any HLL Minors Division player that is willing to play in the game and does not create a safety risk to such player. The use of such player must be reported to the Player Agent after the game and noted on the spreadsheet

The purpose of the player call-up system is not to provide any team a competitive advantage through the call up of a player from a lower division. If the Player Agent, through the tracking of call-ups, determines one player is being called-up to one team multiple times, the Player Agent, in his/her discretion, may block any further call-ups of that player to that team.

12. Pre-Game Batting Cage and Warm Ups

Majors teams have priority over use of the batting cage for one (1) hour, beginning one and one-half (1 ½) hours prior to the start of a Majors game, including all originally scheduled games as well as make-up and tournament games. Majors teams will also have exclusive use of the grassy area outside of the batting cages (between Majors Left Field fence and Minors Right Field fence).

13. Team Warm-Up

The warm-up schedule is designed for equal time at the Majors facilities with the goal of having both teams start the game on time. Games are to begin promptly, and in the case of games that aren't afforded the full 30 minutes prior to the start time both managers should agree to a fair schedule to ensure the game starts on time.

Each team has ten (10) minutes to warm up on the field prior to the start of the game. The home team takes field warm-up thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the game, and the visiting team takes field warm-up twenty (20) minutes prior to the start of the game. Failure to take field warm-up on time will cause that team to forfeit the warm-up so the game can begin on time.

Time interval	Home	Away
60 minutes prior	Batting Cage (20 min)	Field (if available)
40 minutes prior	Field (if available, 10 min)	



30 minutes prior	Field (10 min)	Batting Cage (20 min)
20 minutes prior	Bullpen	Field (10 min)
10 minutes prior	Prep field & Umpire Meeting	Bullpen & Umpire Meeting
First Pitch	Game	Game

14. Game Set-up Responsibilities

The home team uses the 3rd base bench and the visiting team uses the 1st base bench. The home team removes bases from the equipment box and installs the bases on the field of play. Majors has elected to use the double-base at first base this season. In addition, the home team is responsible for raking (or dragging) and watering down the infield immediately prior to the commencement of the game (10 minutes prior to the official start). The home team provides game balls to the umpires. The home team is also responsible for dragging the infield at the conclusion of the game.

15. GameChanger Team Manager

The home team is the official scorekeeper and the team is required to use GameChanger Team Manager to track, at a minimum, the score of the game and the number of pitches thrown by each pitcher on each team. The league suggests that both sides use GameChanger Team Manager to track the pitch count and compare and resolve inconsistencies at the end of every half inning. The home team will record the game score and official and actual pitch counts, home runs, and umpire ratings in the HLL Website no later than 24 hours afterwards.

During the week and after the last game on weekends, the home team is responsible for replacing the base plugs on the infield and returning the bases to the equipment box after the conclusion of the game. The home team also should rebuild the mound and cover the mound and home plate with a tarp. Each of the home team and the visiting team is responsible for clearing all trash in and around the dugouts and the playing field.

16. HLL Code of Conduct and Zero Tolerance Policy

A. Policy Regarding Proper Communications with Umpires

All persons associated with the team, including players, managers, coaches and spectators, shall support the umpires. *No one* is to address the umpire during the game with the following exceptions:

- 1. Managers or players responding to the umpire who addresses him or her,
- 2. Managers making substitutions,
- 3. Managers, coaches, players or spectators pointing out emergencies or safety issues.



4. Managers asking for a rule interpretation¹.

Rule Interpretation Process: A Manager may ask an umpire in a polite and constructive way to explain a rule and its application to the preceding play. In such an instance, the following procedure must be followed: (1) the Manager asks for time to be out; (2) the Plate Umpire indicates that time is out and the play is dead (a field umpire cannot indicate time is out); (3) the Manger may then approach the Plate Umpire as ask for a rule interpretation on the prior play; (4) if the umpire is unfamiliar with or disagrees with the Manager's rule interpretation, the Manager must present a copy of the rule; and (5) it is then the Plate Umpire's discretion whether to change a call on the field. If a copy of the rule is not presented, the appeal could be denied outright.

Absolutely no demonstrative behavior, sarcasm, harassment or intimidation by managers, coaches, players, parents or spectators will be tolerated. Any such behavior will be considered an unsportsmanlike *infraction* subject to the procedure outlined below in (B).

Player behavior is also regulated by the *HLL Player Contract*, to which all Managers and Players have agreed. Under the heading <u>Player Conduct & Enforcement</u>, players are not allowed to throw or kick a bat, helmet, or any equipment in anger (on the field or in the dugout). Players are not allowed to bully or threaten other players or purposely do things that might injure another player.

If an Umpire should (1) observe any Player behave in such a way towards another player or (2) observe or hear a player throw, kick or otherwise mistreat equipment or field fixtures in anger, the behavior will be considered an unsportsmanlike *infraction* subject to the procedure outlined below in (B).

B. <u>Procedure for Enforcement of Unsportsmanlike Infractions</u>

If an Umpire believes an *infraction* has occurred, then the following warnings and penalties may be applied to the offending team. (1) In the Umpire's discretion, the Umpire may provide a warning to the offending team, player, manager, coach or spectator. Any warning must be clear, verbal and acknowledged by the offending party. However, HLL has a zero tolerance policy regarding unsportsmanlike conduct. As a result, (2) the Umpire has discretion to remove the offending individual from the game and field without a warning, if the conduct is egregious. "Egregious" conduct includes, but is not limited to, the use of profanity, behavior resulting in injury (even if unintended), behavior resulting in the unpermitted touching of another person, or conduct that otherwise impedes the orderly process of the game.

Umpire rulings on unsportsmanlike infractions are final and not subject to protest or appeal. The very nature of sportsmanship is subjective, and therefore some inconsistency is unavoidable. Assessing penalties and ejections are a last resort, and the League objective is to have all Managers, Coaches, and Players behave in a sportsmanlike manner where no penalties are required. Any unsportsmanlike infraction, whether it results in a warning or ejection, identified by an Umpire must be reported to the Umpire Director and the Player Agent immediately following the game.

If a Manager or Coach is ejected from a game, he/she will also be suspended for the team's next game as well. The HLL Board retains discretion to enforce these actions as well as the authority to administer other disciplinary actions as it deems necessary.

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¹ For Majors Division only, discretion is vested in the adult plate umpire regarding whether to speak with a Manager about a play call other than a rule interpretation.



If a Player is ejected from a game more than once, the Player will become ineligible to compete in the HLL Division tournament or to be selected for a HLL postseason all-star team. The Player and Players parents are allowed to, and encouraged to meet with the HLL Competition Committee to apologize for the infractions, demonstrate awareness of why certain behavior is not acceptable, and what steps the Player and Player's parents will take to ensure such behaviors will not occur again. In the Competition Committee's sole discretion, the Player's eligibility for HLL Division tournament and HLL postseason all-star teams may be reinstated.

17. Division Championship and Post-Season Playoff

For post-season play, all teams in the Majors Division will be seeded for post-season tournament. The first place team will be awarded the top seed and the remaining seeds will be determined per Win/Loss standings and tiebreakers as described below.

A postseason double-elimination playoff will be held with teams seeded as outlined below. The winners will meet on Championship Saturday in the finals and will play a double header if required. Championship game #1, the home team is from the winner's bracket. Home team for championship game #2, if needed, is the winner of the game #1.

During playoff games, with the exception of the 'what if' game (if necessary), the higher seeded team shall be designated as the Home team.

Win/Loss standings will determine the post-season tournament seeding. If there is a tie, the tie-breaker will be as follows:

- 1) Aggregate head-to-head win/loss record among tied teams
- 2) Fewest runs allowed against all teams in Majors Division
- 3) Flip of a coin

18. Pitch Count Limitations

All pitchers will be held to a maximum total pitch count of 400 pitches during the regular season. The beginning pitch count of record for the player in question will be that expressed by the HLL website on the day that pitcher takes the mound. Upon reaching the limit of 400 pitches, that player will be ineligible to pitch for the remainder of the regular season.

If a pitcher reaches the 400-pitch limit while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs: 1. that batter reaches base; 2. that batter is put out; 3. the third out is made to complete the half-inning.

Pitches during pre-season or post-season play do not count towards a player's 400 pitch limit.

[NEW for 2025] All pitchers will be limited to a maximum of 50 pitches per game until March 15, 2025. Little League Rules on pitching rest and any other pitch limitations still apply.



19. District 52 Umpires

Please note that during the season, umpires from District 52 will officiate several games. These umpires do NOT enforce Local Rules that deviate from Little League Rules.

Addendum A: Selected Excerpts from Little League Rules

Regular Season Pitching Rules - Baseball VI - PITCHERS

- (a) Any player on a regular season team may pitch. (**NOTE**: There is no limit to the number of pitchers a team may use in a game.)
- (b) Pitchers are recommended to wear Head Savers.
- (c) A pitcher once removed from the mound cannot return as a pitcher.
- (d) 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 9-10 75 pitches per day 7-8 50 pitches per day

Exception: If a pitcher reaches the limit imposed in Regulation VI (c) for his/her league age while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs: 1. that batter reaches base; 2. that batter is put out; 3. the third out is made to complete the half-inning.

Note 1: A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day.

Note 2: Any player who has played the position of Catcher in 4 or more innings in a game is not eligible to pitch for the remainder of that calendar day. Receiving even *one pitch* in an inning is considered having caught the entire inning.

Little League Official vs Actual pitch count limits apply to the Catcher position. If a Pitcher begins pitching to a batter with 40 or less pitches thrown, he/she may continue to pitch, and retain eligibility to play the position of Catcher that day, until any one of the following conditions occurs: 1. that batter reaches base; 2. that batter is put out; 3. the third out is made to complete the half-inning.

- (d) Pitchers league age 14 and under must adhere to the following rest requirements:
- If a player pitches 66 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest must be observed. If a player



pitches 51 - 65 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.

- If a player pitches 36 50 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 21 35 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest is required
- (e) A pitcher may not pitch three (3) consecutive calendar days, regardless of the number of pitches thrown the previous two (2) calendar days.
- (f) Each league must designate the scorekeeper or another game official as the official pitch count recorder.
- (g) The pitch count recorder must provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either manager or any umpire. However, the manager is responsible for knowing when his/her pitcher must be removed.
- (h) The official pitch count recorder should inform the umpire-in-chief when a pitcher has delivered his/her maximum limit of pitches for the game, as noted in Regulation VI (c). The umpire-in-chief will inform the pitcher's manager that the pitcher must be removed in accordance with Regulation VI (c). However, the failure by the pitch count recorder to notify the umpire-in-chief, and/or the failure of the umpire-in-chief to notify the manager, does not relieve the manager of his/her responsibility to remove a pitcher when that pitcher is no longer eligible.
- (i) Violation of any section of this regulation can result in protest of the game in which it occurs. Protest shall be made in accordance with Playing Rule 4.19.
- (j) A player who has attained the league age of twelve (12) is not eligible to pitch in the Minor League. (See Regulation V Selection of Players)
- (k) A player may not pitch in more than one game in a day. **NOTES**: 1. The withdrawal of an ineligible pitcher after that pitcher is announced, or after a warm-up pitch is delivered, but before that player has pitched a ball to the batter, shall not be considered a violation. Little League officials are urged to take precautions to prevent protests. When a protest situation is imminent, the potential offender should be notified immediately.
- 2. Pitches delivered in games declared "Regulation Tie Games" or "Suspended Games" shall be charged against pitcher's eligibility. 3. In suspended games resumed on another day, the pitchers of record at the time the game was halted may continue to pitch to the extent of their eligibility for that day, provided said pitcher has observed the required days of rest.
- **Example 1**: A league age 11 pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on Monday when the game is suspended. The game resumes on the following Thursday. The pitcher is not eligible to pitch in the resumption of the game because he/she has not observed the required days of rest.
- **Example 2**: A league age 11 pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on Monday when the game is suspended. The game resumes on Saturday. The pitcher is eligible to pitch up to 85 more pitches at the resumption of the game because he/she has observed the required days of rest.
- **Example 3**: A league age 11 pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on Monday when the game is suspended. The game resumes two weeks later. The pitcher is eligible to pitch up to 85 more pitches in the resumption of the



game, provided he/she is eligible based on his/her pitching record during the previous four days. **Note**: The use of this regulation negates the concept of the "calendar week" with regard to pitching eligibility.

Posting Pitching Statistics to The HLL Website - Official vs Actual

Per Item 15 above, The HOME TEAM is responsible for recording the game score and official and actual pitch counts, home runs, and umpire ratings in the HLL Website no later than 24 hours afterwards. The home team will record both the Actual and Official pitch count for each Pitcher. These terms are defined as:

Actual Pitch Count: is defined as the total number of pitches thrown by the Pitcher that day.

Official Pitch Count: *only* differs from Actual Pitch count if a Pitcher reaches a Little League Pitch threshold while pitching to his/her final batter. Little League Pitch thresholds are at 20, 35, 50, 65, 75 & 85 pitches thrown. The official pitch count reverts back to the threshold *only* if a Pitcher passes the threshold while pitching to their last batter.

Official Pitch Count determines the required days of rest per Little League rule.

1-20 Pitches requires **0** days rest

21-35 Pitches requires 1 days rest

36-50 Pitches requires **2** days rest

51-65 pitches requires 3 days rest

66+ pitches requires 4 days rest

As noted above: If a pitcher reaches a pitch count limit for his/her league age *while facing a batter*, the pitcher may continue to pitch until any one of the following conditions occurs: 1. that batter reaches base; 2. that batter is put out; 3. the third out is made to complete the half-inning (Example 1 below)

If a Pitcher finishes pitching to a batter *at* a threshold limit (20, 35, 50, 65, 75, 85 pitches thrown) he/she may not pitch to another batter and revert back to the LL threshold (Example 2 below)

Example 1: A Pitcher begins pitching to a batter with 19 pitches thrown. The Pitcher throws 4 more pitches to the batter and records the final out. The actual pitch count would equal 23 and the official pitch count would equal 20. The required rest for the Pitcher would be 0 days

Example 2: A Pitcher begins pitching to a batter with 20 pitches. The Pitcher throws 1 more pitch to the batter and records the final out. The actual and official pitch count would equal 21 pitches and the Pitcher would be required to rest 1 day.

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pitches to the batter and records the final out. The actual pitch count would equal 79 and the official pitch count would equal 75. The Pitcher has reached his/her LL Pitch Count threshold and may no longer continue in the game as Pitcher. 4 days rest would be required.

Example 4: A 12-yr old Pitcher records the 2nd out of an inning by throwing his/her 85th pitch. Per Little League rule he/she has reached his/her maximum pitch count and must be removed from the position of Pitcher. The actual and official pitch count would equal 85 and 4 days of rest would be required.