

## GENERAL

Baseball SA's Challenger Division program is based on the Little League Challenger Division® founded in 1989. The program is Little League International's adaptive baseball program for individuals with physical and intellectual challenges.

The Challenger program empowers individuals, regardless of their disability, to form life-long friendships with their teammates and their volunteer Buddies. It is a "play for fun" league that enables these children to experience the joys of sport while participating in a team environment.

Flexibility and adaptability are key during Challenger games. All players play defensively and bat every innings.

Any individual with a physical or intellectual challenge may participate, however, if an individual can participate in Baseball SA's Junior or Senior Competition with reasonable accommodations, they should do so.

1. Challenger Division participants and their responsibilities:
  - **Players:** developmentally and physically challenged boys and girls aged 5 to 18 (22 if still living at home).
  - **Umpire/Game Supervisor:** responsible for controlling the game, keeping time, calling batters to the box and keeping the game flowing.
  - **Buddy:** responsible for coaching, caring and working with a player in the batter's box, along the base paths, in the field and on the bench as required. Depending on the player's ASL, the Buddy may be required to help the batter swing, run, field and throw.
  - **Head Coach:** responsible for managing the team and assigning an ASL to each player and communicating it to the opposition Coach and Umpire via Baseball SA's Official Player List.
2. Players, Umpire/Game Supervisors, Buddies and Coaches **must be registered** with Baseball SA before participating.
3. Umpire/Game Supervisors, Buddies and Coaches **must have a current Working With Children Check** certificate.
4. Players may be assigned an **ability and safety level (ASL)** by their Head Coach which can be amended each game. The ASL will provide game day officials, especially Buddies, with an indication as to what help the participant will require with their game, for example, any verbal or physical assistance with batting, running, fielding or throwing. An ASL will be based on a participant's abilities and demeanour which can obviously change from week to week. The ASL is purely an indicator, not a requirement.

**ASL A:** a Buddy will be allowed to provide full verbal and physical assistance to the player with regard to batting, fielding, running and throwing (a Buddy will be approved to touch the player and intervene for the player to carry out the activities).

**ASL B:** a Buddy will be encouraged to assist the player with verbal and some physical assistance with regard to batting, fielding, running and throwing (a Buddy will be approved to touch the player but they shall first allow the player to have a go themselves before intervening).

**ASL C:** a Buddy will be encouraged to support the player mainly with verbal assistance with regard to batting, fielding, running and throwing (although a Buddy will be approved to touch the player, the player has been assessed to have the ability to carry out the activities with minimal help, therefore the Buddy must allow the player to have a go themselves before asking if they need help and then intervening).

5. A **minimum of 7 players per side** is Baseball SA's recommendation.
6. A **maximum of 12 players per side** is Baseball SA's recommendation.
7. Games shall be a **maximum of three innings or approximately 45 minutes, whichever comes first**.
8. Scoring is not required for any Baseball SA purposes, however an Official Player List must be completed for Player, Buddy and Coach registration, accreditation and insurance purposes.
9. Baseball SA will approve the Challenger Division ball each season.

Season 2021/22:

**Greatrex GTX BB-SAFETY9-DY reduced injury ball**

- Durable, hard-wearing TPU skin
- 9 inch circumference
- Soft centred
- Reduces the risk of injury
- Optic Yellow for high visibility



10. Challenger Division will not have any bat restrictions, participants may use a bat that is comfortable for them to swing. Foam bats may be introduced.
11. Diamond Size (approximate):
  - Base Paths 15 metres
  - Dead Ball Line 9 metres (benches must be 9 metres back from the diamond)
  - Outfield cones are optional and can be set at 30 metres from Home Plate.

## BATTING

1. All participating players shall have one plate appearance each innings.
2. **Batters must wear a helmet** at all times when batting.
3. A batter can elect to use a tee or face a pitch (coach-pitch).

# Baseball SA Challenger Division Guidelines

4. When the Umpire calls “**Batter Up**”, the batter shall take their stance in the batting box. A Coach or Buddy is able to station themselves near the batter’s box or in the batter’s box in order to set the player up and help them with their swing at the ball in accordance with the player’s ASL.
5. When the umpire calls “**Play Ball**”, the batter is permitted to hit the ball.
6. A **foul ball** in Challenger Division is only called when, in the opinion of the Umpire/Game Supervisor:
  - i. the batter hits more of the tee than the ball
  - ii. the ball falls so far away from fair territory it is dangerous or confusing to the fielders to field the ball and make a play
7. The batter will **continue his/her time at bat until the ball is successfully hit**. If a batter is using coach-pitch, then after 3 unsuccessful swings, the player can hit off the tee to keep the game moving along.
8. Batters are encouraged to run to First Base on their hit and remain at First Base until the next batter hits the ball.
9. The hitter is encouraged not to throw the bat dangerously after their successful connection.
10. **Batters are not declared “out”** if a fielder catches a fly ball, they are allowed to complete their race to First Base and continue to run bases to complete their journey to Home Plate with each hit from their teammates.

## BASE RUNNING

1. **Base runners must wear a helmet** at all times whilst base running.
2. **Runners are not declared “out”** if a fielder reaches the base with the ball before they reach the base, they are allowed to complete their journey to Home Plate with each hit from their teammates. A Coach or Buddy is able to station themselves near the base or on the base in order to help the player run in accordance with the player’s ASL.
3. **Base stealing is not encouraged**. Base runners are encouraged to only progress one base at a time on a hit.
4. Runners are encouraged to be in contact **with the base until the ball is hit**, after which the runners are permitted to run.
5. On **overthrows (that travel outside the playing field) at any base**, the ball is automatically declared dead. **No runner(s)** including the batter/runner may advance beyond the base that they are approaching.

## FIELDING

1. A Coach or Buddy is able to station themselves near their player in the field in order to help the player field in accordance with the player's ASL.
2. A fielder must not stand on a line between any base that may **cause the runner to be restricted**, the runner is to be given the base that he/she is attempting to reach.
3. The player playing in the position as Catcher must wear catcher's safety gear.
4. Infielders have the option to wear facemasks.
5. **There aren't any "outs" recorded in Challenger Division, just good plays!**

## COACHING & UMPIRING

1. **No debates** on any calls are permitted. **All Umpires' decisions are final.**
2. When batting, Coaches may occupy First and Second Base Coaches Boxes.
3. A Team Manager is required to look after the batting team while they occupy the bench to ensure players are ready and batting in order. This helps keep the game moving.
4. Coaches will ensure their team will line up after the game and cross home plate, shaking the hands of the opposition team in the act of "Good Sportsmanship and Fair Play". They are to ensure their players only comment positively throughout the game.

## OFFICIAL PLAYER LIST

1. For insurance reasons, and accreditation and registration compliance, Baseball SA require all Challenger Players, Coaches, Buddies and Umpire/Game Supervisors to be listed on a Baseball SA Official Player List and that this is submitted to Baseball SA after completion of the game.
2. The Official Player List will display each Player's name, ASL (if assigned) and Club, the Umpire/Game Supervisor's name and Club and any Coaching official's names and Club.

## CONDUCT

1. Players, officials and spectators are governed by Baseball SA's Bylaws and Code of Conduct.