

SUNSET PARK LITTLE LEAGUE'S GUIDE TO SCOREKEEPING

By Frank Elsasser
(with materials compiled from various internet sites)

Scorekeeping, especially for a Little League baseball game, is both fun and simple. The key is to know the basic abbreviations, how to score the plays and, of course, paying attention to the game. There is no one correct way to keep score—there are many variations, and various bits of information can be conveyed from the scoresheet. This guide presents one method for keeping score. I would suggest talking with your team's manager before the season starts to see what information he or she wants to be able to review. First, you must familiarize yourself with two key systems for recording information: (1) the scoresheet abbreviations for baseball occurrences, and (2) the numbers that correspond to fielding positions.

The important **abbreviations** are as follows:

Basic Abbreviations	
Abbreviation	Definitions
1B	Single
2B	Double
3B	Triple
BB	Base on Balls
BK	Balk
CS	Caught Stealing
DP	Double Play
DH	Designated Hitter
E	Error
FC	Fielder's Choice
FO	Force-Out
HBP	Hit By Pitch
HR	Home Run
I	Interference
IW	Intentional Walk
K	Strikeout
PB	Passed Ball
SB	Stolen Base
SF	Sacrifice Fly
SH	Sacrifice Hit
WP	Wild Pitch

These are the abbreviations you will put into the scorebook to denote the specific play that occurred during the at-bat you are scoring. Most scorebooks will have a column of common batter results for you to simply circle, i.e. 1B, 2B, etc. Also, please note that K generally means a strikeout swinging, while a backwards K means a strikeout looking. For those of you not entirely familiar with baseball terminology, the following may help you recognize these occurrences when you see them:

A **Base on Balls** is a Walk (4 balls before 3 strikes are recorded).

A **Balk** is a rule violation by a pitcher (too many possible balk rules to try and explain here). The penalty is that each runner on base gets to advance one base. This rarely occurs in Little League baseball.

An **Error** occurs when, in the scorekeeper's judgment, a player misplays a ball he should have played cleanly.

A **Fielder's Choice** occurs when a player hits the ball in play and reaches base safely, but another baserunner is retired on that same play. For example, Timmy hits a ground ball to shortstop, the shortstop throws to second to retire Joey, who is running from first to second. Even though Timmy reached base safely, he is not given a hit because the fielders chose to retire Joey instead.

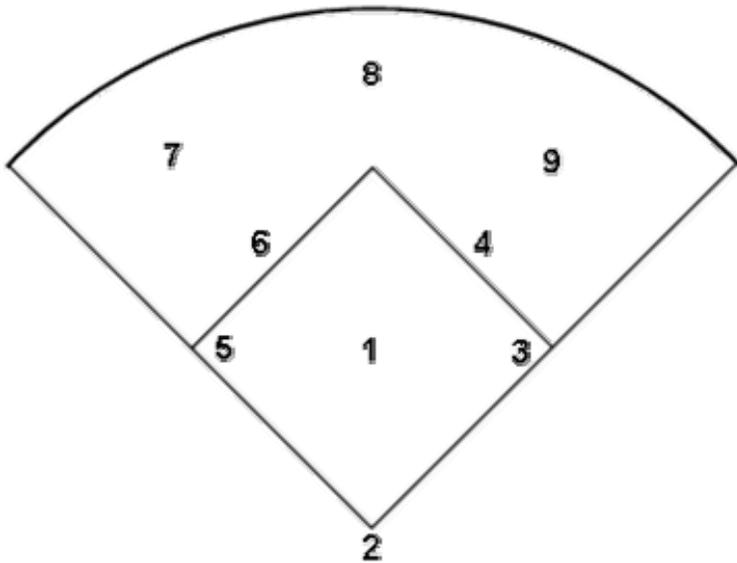
A **Force Out** occurs when a runner has to run (all bases behind him are occupied) and the fielder has the ball on the next base before the runner arrives.

When a pitched ball gets by the catcher and results in a runner or runners advancing on a play, that is either a **Wild Pitch** or a **Passed Ball**. A Wild Pitch is scored when, in the scorekeeper's judgment, it was the pitcher's fault that the ball eluded the catcher, and a Passed Ball is the result of the catcher's mistake.

A **Sacrifice Fly** occurs when a runner on third tags up and scores on a fly ball.

A **Sacrifice Hit** occurs when a player bunts a runner over to the next base, while he is retired at first.

The **fielding positions** are as follows:



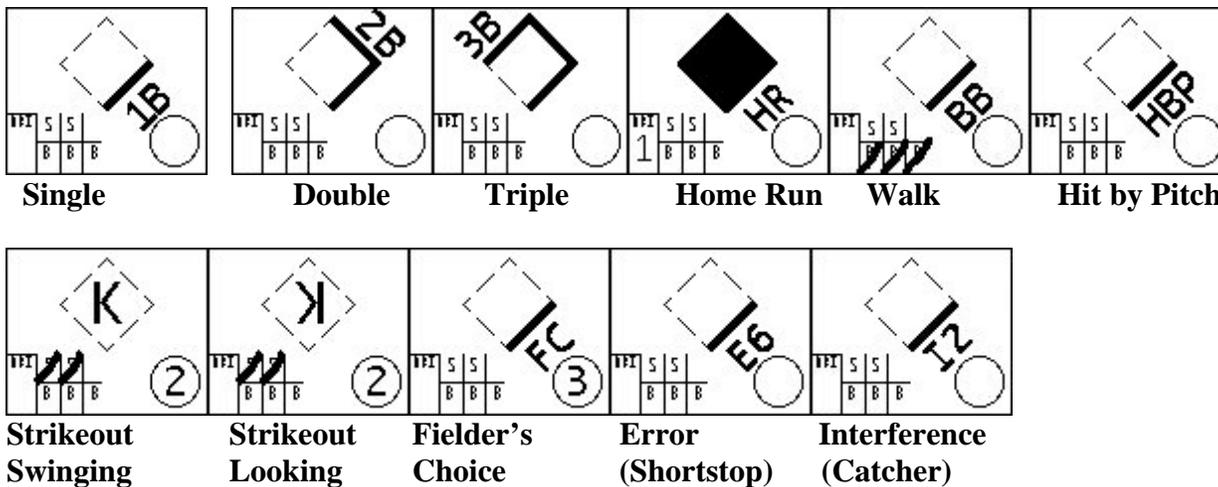
This is fairly simple, as the fielding positions start at pitcher, go to catcher, and continue around the infield counterclockwise, then to left field and around the outfield clockwise. The trick is that third base comes ahead of shortstop, and I'm not sure why. This information should be conveyed to you on the reference page in the scorebook provided by the league. You will find that you will quickly remember these once you score a few games.

This is generally all the information that goes into a scoresheet. The rest of the job is simply tracking the game and putting the information on the scoresheet correctly.

#	Player	Pos	1
9	Smith, J.	8	◇
	Sub		
29	Lawson, A.	4	◇
	Sub		
17	Henry, D.	2	◇
	Sub		
33	Jones, T.	9	◇
	Sub		

Generally, the scoresheet will look something like this (only the first four entries are shown, but remember in SPLL at all levels, all players will bat in the batting order, regardless of whether they were in the game at the time their turn in the batting order came up). For SPLL games, since the positions will likely change often, it is unnecessary to put a player's fielding position down. However, it is important to put the jersey numbers down, to make sure you are tracking the right hitters throughout the game. Also, because all players bat in any given game, there is no real need to concern yourself with substitutions.

The basic plays that occur in baseball are scored as follows:



Often, on a base hit, a scorekeeper will also draw a line to show where the ball was hit.

Scoring Outs on Balls in Play:

For a ball put in play that is not caught in the air, the numbers of the positions are used to denote how the ball moved on the play. For example

A groundball to shortstop, with the runner thrown out at first, is scored: **6-3**

A groundball to third base, with the runner thrown out at second, is scored: **FC 5-4**

A double play on a ground ball to short, thrown to second, then to first is: **DP 6-4-3**

If a play is made unassisted (the player who fields the ball records the out without throwing the ball to another player), a U is placed after the player's position number. A ground ball fielded by the first baseman who then steps on the base is scored: **3U**

A caught fly ball is denoted with an F in front of the player position who caught it. For example, a fly ball caught by the right fielder is scored: **F9**

A caught line drive is denoted with an L in front of the player position who caught it. For example, a line drive caught by the third baseman is scored: **L5**

Scoring a Player's Progress After he Reaches Base:

After a player reaches base, the scorekeeper continues to track the player's progress, and denotes the event that caused him to move from one base to another.

A solid line on the diamond denotes a player's advance to the next base.

If he is retired before reaching the next base, use a line or an X to denote the player was retired before he could advance to the next base.

If a player scores a run, fill in the entire diamond to denote a run scored.

Some examples of scoring baserunning:

If a player on first steals second, a line is drawn first to second, with the letters SB written above that line.

If that player advances to third on a single, a line is drawn from second to third with 1B written above that line (if you want to get advanced, you can write 1B and the jersey number of the player who hit the single, i.e. 1B21 if no. 21 hit the single).

If a player on third scores on a passed ball, draw a line from third to home, with PB written next to that line (and color in the diamond because a run was scored).

These are the basic rules for scoring hits, errors, outs, and baserunning. If multiple things occur on one play (as often happens in Little League), you simply combine the terms referenced above. **THE RESULT IS RECORDED IN THE SCORESHEET FOR THE PLAYER WHO WAS OUT.** For example:

Batter lines out to third, third baseman throws to first to get the runner who was on first. For the batter, score **DP L5**, for the baserunner, score **5-3**.

Runners on first and second, batter grounds to third, third baseman steps on third to retire runner coming from second. Batter is scored **FC**, and a line is drawn from home to first; runner on first has a line drawn from first to second with **FC** written above it, and runner on second has a line drawn halfway to third, then a line or an X, and **5U** written above that line.

This may all sound confusing, but it's not that hard. Just remember to track what happens to each batter as it happens, and write what caused that result above that section of the diamond on the scorecard. To better follow this, please see the following two innings tracked in a scorebook.

#	Player	Pos	1
9	Smith, J.	8	
		Sub	
29	Lawson, A.	4	
		Sub	
17	Henry, D.	2	
		Sub	
33	Jones, T.	9	
		Sub	

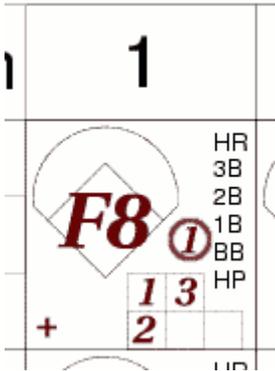
In this instance, Smith led off the inning with a single to left center. Lawson struck out swinging. Then, while Henry was at bat, Smith stole second (that's why it says SB17—SB denotes stolen base, and 17 denotes Henry's jersey number, the batter at-bat when the base was stolen). Henry then walked, putting runners on first and second. Jones then hit a ground ball to shortstop, who threw to second for one out, and the second baseman threw to first to complete the double play. NOTE: the scorekeeper here put a slash after Jones to denote the inning was complete. I recommend drawing a line after Jones' entry all the way down the scoresheet so you know to start the next inning in the next column. I can't tell you how many times I've started the second inning in the first column when I don't do this. The circled numbers indicate which out of the inning was made on which batter.

At the end of an inning, tally up the runs for that inning and put them at the bottom of the column. Also, tally the total runs for the game below the spot you tallied the runs for the inning.

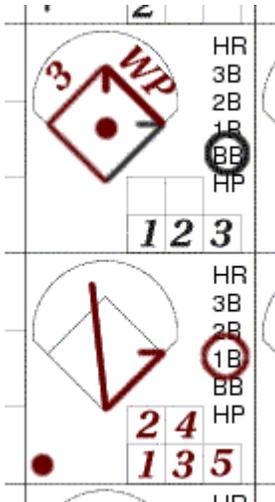
Other Scorekeeping Conventions:

Some additional things you can do to track the game.

For each batter, place the pitch number in the boxes for balls and strikes. If a two strike pitch is fouled off, add a + next to the boxes. This will allow you to always know the count (in case the umpire forgets) and will allow a coach to know how many pitches a particular kid has thrown (a crucial piece of information for a coach who's on the ball). Here's an example: (see next page)



In this case, the first pitch was a strike, the second pitch was a ball, the third pitch was a strike, the fourth pitch was fouled off, and on the fifth pitch the batter flied out to center field.



In this case, the first batter listed walked on four straight balls, advanced to second on a wild pitch and scored on a single by the player wearing jersey no. 3 (you could put 1B or 1B3 to denote this as well). Also note, this scorekeeper likes to use a hash mark to denote each base the player stopped at—this is uncommon. The second player singled in the first player, after going to a full count. The dot in the lower left hand corner is used to denote a Run Batted In (RBI), because the second player scored the first player with his hit. Also, this scorekeeper used a dot in the middle of the diamond to denote the run scored, whereas most scorekeepers will fill in the entire diamond to denote the run scored.

There are many more nuances to scorekeeping, but this should give you all you need to know, and probably more than you care to know. If you have questions during a game, the scorebook should have a reference page to help you out. If you have a question after a game, try searching the internet for one of several helpful websites on scorekeeping. If you still can't find an answer, you can email me at frankelsasser@comcast.net. Thanks for taking on the important task of being a Sunset Park Little League scorekeeper. Play Ball!!!