

Rule Changes and Clarifications - Approved Changes from 2018 Congress

Below are a list of rule and regulation changes that have been approved by the Little League International Board of Directors during the 27th Little League International Congress in New Orleans on January 19-22, 2018. These changes will be implemented effective immediately.

Please note: These changes are **NOT** listed in the printed version of the 2018 rulebooks, but have been reflected in the eBook versions. Underlined text are additions, strikethrough text are removals.

Regulations

Regulation III(c) – The Teams; Operating Policies – Local League Draft Methods [Baseball, Softball]
Divisions: Major League divisions of Baseball and Softball

Synopsis: This eliminates the maximum of eight (8) – 12-year-olds on a Major Division team.

Regulation III(c)

Little League (Major) Division: Local league must establish the age structure for the Little League (Major) Division. It is recommended that the local Little League set a maximum and/or minimum number of participants of a particular league age per team. For Intermediate (50/70) Division/Junior/Senior League, it is recommended that the local Little League set a maximum and/or minimum number of participants of a particular league age. (Example: If the league has all 15- and 16-year-olds in its Senior League Division, it may have a local rule that states that each team must carry between four and eight players of league age 16.)

Operating Policies – Local League Draft Method – Methods for Existing Leagues

It is recommended that managers not select more than eight players in a given age group. The team roster may be comprised of players of league age 9, 10, 11, and 12 unless modified by the local league according to options established by Little League. The local league may opt to allow only 10, 11, and 12, or 11- and 12-year-olds, to try out for the Major Division.

Regulation VI(d) – Pitchers; Tournament Rule 4 [Baseball, Challenger]

Divisions: All divisions of Baseball and Challenger

Synopsis: This restricts a player from pitching in three consecutive days in Regular Season and Tournament.

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 day of rest must be observed.

If a player pitches 1-20 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest is required.

NOTE: Under no circumstances shall a player pitch in three (3) consecutive days.

EXCEPTION: If a pitcher reaches a day(s) of rest threshold 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 retired; or (3) the third out is made to complete the half-inning or the game. The pitcher will only be required to observe the calendar day(s) of rest for the threshold he/she reached during that at-bat, provided that pitcher is removed or the game is completed before delivering a pitch to another batter.

Pitchers league age 15-16 must adhere to the following rest requirements:

If a player pitches 76 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest must be observed.

If a player pitches 61-75 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.

If a player pitches 46-60 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.

If a player pitches 31-45 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.

If a player pitches 1-30 pitches in a day, no (0) calendar day of rest is required.

NOTE: Under no circumstances shall a player pitch in three (3) consecutive days.

EXCEPTION: If a pitcher reaches a day(s) of rest threshold 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 retired; or (3) the third out is made to complete the half-inning or the game. The pitcher will only be required to observe the calendar day(s) of rest for the threshold he/she reached during that at-bat, provided that pitcher is removed or the game is completed before delivering a pitch to another batter.

Regulation VI Note 3 – Pitchers/ Rule 4.10(d); and Tournament Rule 11 [Baseball, Softball, Challenger]

Divisions: All divisions of Baseball, Softball, and Challenger

Synopsis: All suspended games will be resumed exactly where they were left off. Regular Season pitching will be governed by Regulation VI. Tournament pitching will be governed by Tournament Rule 4.

Regulation VI Note 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. ~~In the event that the first inning is not completed, all records, including pitching records, batting records, etc., shall be retained.~~

Rule 4.10(d)

If a game is called before it has become a regulation game, it shall be resumed exactly where it left off.

~~NOTE: In the event that the first inning is not completed, all records, including pitching, shall be counted.~~

Tournament Rule 11

SUSPENDED GAMES: Any game in which a winner cannot be determined in accordance with the playing rules shall be resumed from the exact point at which it was suspended regardless of the number of innings played. ~~Exception: In the event that the first inning is not completed, the game shall be~~

~~replayed from the beginning and all records, including pitching, disregarded.~~ Incomplete (not regulation) or tie games are considered suspended games.

NOTE: A contest decided by forfeit does not constitute a “game” for the purposes of this rule, unless one complete inning was physically played before the game was forfeited. (Forfeits are only by decree of the Tournament Committee in Williamsport.)

Regulation VII(a) – Schedules; Tournament League Eligibility (2) [Baseball, Softball]

Divisions: Senior divisions of Baseball and Softball

Synopsis: This allows a Board of Directors to only schedule a 10-game Regular Season schedule for Senior Baseball and Softball teams. For Senior Division Tournament eligibility, a team must play a 10-game Regular Season schedule.

Regulation VII: (a)

The schedule of games for the regular season shall be prepared by the Board of Directors of the league and must provide for not less than twelve (12) games [Senior Division: Ten (10) games] per team per regular season against other Little League teams within their respective division, exclusive of playoff and tournament games. Tee Ball: It is recommended that no more than twelve (12) games be scheduled per team per season.

Tournament League Eligibility (2)

The league must have scheduled and played, at a minimum, a 12-game [Senior League: Ten (10-game)] (per team) regular season, exclusive of playoffs and tournament games, for each division, or age appropriate division, entering tournament prior to the first game in their respective tournament. See Reg. VII. NOTE 1: Forfeited games shall not count towards the 12-game [Senior League: Ten (10)-game] regular season. NOTE 2: For Junior Tournament eligibility, Senior League players league age 13 and 14 must have played in a minimum of eight (8) games.

Playing Rules

Rule 3.03 – [Baseball, Softball]

Divisions: All divisions of Baseball and Softball

Synopsis: This would revise the substitution rule for all divisions of play for the Regular Season.

Rule 3.03

A player in the starting line-up who has been removed for a substitute may re-enter the game, in the SAME position in the batting order, provided:

- (a) his or her substitute has completed one time at bat and;
- (b) has played defensively for a minimum of six (6) consecutive outs;
- (c)

Baseball: pitchers once removed from the mound may not return as pitchers; Intermediate (50/70) Division/Junior/Senior: A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher any time in the remainder of the game, but only once per game.

NOTE: A player who has met the mandatory play requirements, and is a pitcher at the time she/he is removed, may be removed for a substitute batter and re-enter the game as a pitcher once, provided the pitcher was not physically replaced on the mound.

EXAMPLE: Player A is a starter and not a pitcher, Player B substitutes into the game for player A. Both players have met mandatory play by completing one (1) time at bat and six (6) consecutive defensive outs and both occupy the same spot in the batting order. In the fifth inning player A becomes a pitcher and is scheduled to bat in the sixth inning, but player B bats for player A. Both players have met mandatory play requirements and player A was not physically replaced on the mound as a pitcher, therefore, player A can return to pitch the sixth inning.

Softball: a pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game, but only once in the same inning as he/she was removed.

Minor/Major Divisions: NOTE: A pitcher, withdrawn from the game for a substitute offensively or defensively, may not re-enter the game as a pitcher. This applies to continuous batting order.

EXCEPTION: A pitcher may re-enter the game as a pitcher, if withdrawn for a pinch-hitter or pinch-runner, and then returned to the game at the beginning of the next half-inning.

Junior/Senior Divisions: A pitcher may be withdrawn from the game, offensively or defensively, and return as pitcher once per inning provided the return does not violate either the substitution, visits per pitcher, or mandatory play rule(s).

(d) A starter and her/his substitute must not be in the line-up at the same time, except as provided in 3.03 Note 3. Once mandatory play is met, a starter and substitute(s) can enter/re-enter for each other as desired, but must re-enter in the SAME position in the batting order.

(e) Defensive substitutions must be made while the team is on defense. Offensive substitutions must be made at the time the offensive player has her/his turn at bat or is on base.

NOTE 1: A substitute may not be removed from the game prior to completion of his/her mandatory play requirements.

NOTE 2: When two or more substitute players of the defensive team enter the game at the same time, the manager shall, immediately before they take their positions as fielders, designate to the Umpire-in-Chief such players' positions in the team's batting order and the Umpire-in-Chief shall notify the official scorer. The Umpire-in-Chief shall have authority to designate the substitutes' places in the batting order, if this information is not immediately provided.

NOTE 3: If during a game either team is unable to place nine (9) players on the field due to illness, injury, ejection, or inability to make a legal substitution, the opposing manager shall select a player previously used in the line-up to re-enter the game, but only if use of all eligible players has exhausted the roster. A player ejected from the game is not eligible for re-entry.

Rule 4.10(e) and Tournament Rule 12 – Regulation Game [Baseball, Softball]

Divisions: All divisions of Baseball and Softball

Synopsis: This allows a local league to implement a 15-run rule after three [four innings for Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior League]. This would be mandatory during the International Tournament.

Rule 4.10(e)

If after three (3) innings [Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior League: four innings], two and one-half innings [Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior League: three and one-half innings] if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of fifteen (15) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. If after four (4) innings [Intermediate (50/70) Division/Junior/Senior League: five innings], three and one-half innings [Intermediate (50/70) Division/Junior/Senior League: four and one-half innings] if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of ten (10) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. NOTE: (1) If the visiting team has a lead of fifteen (15) or ten (10) runs or more respectively, the home team must bat in its half of the inning. (2) The local league may adopt the option of not utilizing this rule.

Tournament Rule 12

RUN RULE: If at the end of three (3) innings [Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior League: four innings], two and one-half innings [Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior League: three and one-half innings] if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of fifteen (15) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. If at the end of a regulation game one team has a lead of ten (10) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. NOTE: If the visiting team has a lead of fifteen (15) or ten (10) or more runs respectively, the home team must bat in its half of the inning.

Rule 8.06 (a) and (b) and Tournament Rule 7 – The Pitcher [Baseball, Softball]

Divisions: Major division and above of Baseball and Softball

Synopsis: This reduces the number of visits to a pitcher to twice in one inning or three times in a game for the Major Division and above for Baseball and Softball.

Rule 8.06:

This rule, which applies to each pitcher who enters a game, governs the visits of the manager or coach to the pitcher at the mound.

(a) A manager or coach may come out once (Minor Division: twice) in one inning to visit with the pitcher, but the second time (Minor Division: third time) out, the player must be removed as a pitcher. Example: If a manager visits Pitcher A once in the first inning, then makes a pitching change in the same inning, Pitcher B would be allowed one visit in that inning before being removed on the second visit.

(b) A manager or coach may come out twice (Minor Division: three times) in one game to visit with the pitcher, but the third time (Minor Division: fourth time) out, the player must be removed as a pitcher. Example: If a manager visits Pitcher A twice in the first three innings, then makes a pitching change in the fourth inning, Pitcher B would be allowed two visits in that game before being removed on the third visit, subject to the limits in (a) above.

Tournament Rule 7

VISITS: A manager or coach may not leave a dugout for any reason during a game without receiving permission from an umpire. The manager or coach may be removed from the field for the remainder of the game for violation of this rule. When permission is granted, the manager or coach will be permitted to go to the mound to confer with the pitcher or any defensive player(s). A manager or coach who is granted a time out to talk to any defensive player will be charged with a visit to the pitcher.

9- to 11-Year-Old Division, Little League, Intermediate (50-70) Division, Junior League, and Senior League: A manager or coach may come out once in one inning to visit with the pitcher, but the second time out, the player must be removed as a pitcher. The manager or coach may come out twice in a game to visit with the pitcher, but the third time out, the player must be removed as a pitcher. The rule applies to each pitcher who enters a game.

8- to 10-Year-Old Division: A manager or coach may come out twice in one inning to visit with the pitcher, but the third time out, the player must be removed as a pitcher. The manager or coach may come out three times in a game to visit with the pitcher, but the fourth time out, the player must be removed as a pitcher. The rule applies to each pitcher who enters a game.

NOTE: Only one offensive time-out will be permitted each inning.

Tournament Rules and Guidelines

Player Eligibility [Baseball]

Divisions: Little League Baseball, Intermediate (50/70) Baseball

Synopsis: This allows players league age 11 and 12, who participated in 60% of their respective Intermediate (50-70) Division Regular Season games to be eligible for selection to the Little League Baseball (Major) Division tournament team. Special Games at the Intermediate (50-70) Baseball Division will NOT count towards Tournament eligibility.

Little League (Major) Division – Any player League Age 10, 11, or 12, with amateur status, who has participated as an eligible player in 60 percent (60%) of the regular season games (Special Games may NOT be counted toward this requirement) by the start of Tournament Play in their respective District, with the exception of the school baseball season, on a:

Little League Baseball (Major) Division team, or;
Intermediate (50-70) Division Team.

Player Eligibility [Softball]

Divisions: Little League Softball, Junior League Softball

Synopsis: This allows players league age 12, who participated in 60% of their respective Junior Division Regular Season games to be eligible for selection to the Little League (Major) Division tournament team. Special Games at the Junior Softball Division will NOT count towards Tournament eligibility.

Little League (Major) Division – Any player League Age 10, 11, or 12, with amateur status, who has participated as an eligible player in 60 percent (60%) of the regular season games (Special Games may

NOT be counted toward this requirement) by the start of Tournament Play in their respective District, with the exception of the school softball season, on a:

Little League Softball (Major) Division team, or;
Junior League Softball Team.

Tournament Protest – Use of an Ineligible Player [Baseball, Softball]

Divisions: All divisions of Baseball and Softball

Synopsis: This would disqualify and remove any team from the Little League International Tournament who is found to have used an ineligible player during a game.

The Use of an Ineligible Player

Ineligibility under this rule applies to league age, residence or school attendance (as defined by Little League Baseball, Incorporated), participation in other programs, or participation as an eligible player for sixty (60%) percent of the regular season in the proper division, or violation of Regulation I-XVII.

1. If the facts establishing or verifying the ineligibility of a player become known to a complainant, Tournament Official, or Tournament Director after the ineligible player participated in a game during the International Tournament, that team shall be disqualified and removed from the International Tournament, subject to any of the following conditions:

(a) A protest is lodged by the manager or coach with the Umpire-in-Chief, who shall consult with the Tournament Director or District Administrator. The Tournament Director or District Administrator must contact the Regional Director (or his/her appointed agent), who shall contact the Tournament Committee for a decision. The decision of the Tournament Committee shall be final and binding.

(b) The Tournament Director, District Administrator, or Tournament Official become aware of the circumstances by any means, they must contact the Regional Director (or his/her appointed agent), who shall contact the Tournament Committee for a decision. The decision of the Tournament Committee shall be final and binding.