
LITTLE LEAGUE REGULATION/RULE CHANGES FOR 2016 SEASON

Last Updated Feb 16, 2016

The following is a summary of the changes between the 2016 Little League Baseball and Softball regulations and rules and their 2015 counterparts. Items have been loosely categorized as to whether the change represents a clarification of existing practice that was simply added to the rulebook, or whether it represents an actual change to the rules or regulations.

Throughout this document, text that is underlined represents the modified or newly added text. In addition, some of the changes apply only to baseball, and some apply only to softball. Items are marked to show the sport(s) to which they apply.

REGULATION I(C)

REGULATION CHANGE

Baseball and Softball

The duration for which leagues are required to save Volunteer Applications has changed. Regulation I(c)(8) used to read, in part:

The "Little League Official Volunteer Application" must be maintained by the president of the local league Board of Directors for all persons named above, for a minimum of the duration of the applicant's service to the league for that year.

It now reads

The "Little League Official Volunteer Application" must be maintained by the president of the local league Board of Directors for all persons named above, for a minimum of at least two years after the volunteer is no longer in the league. When it comes time to dispose of these records, they should be destroyed as they contain sensitive information.

In addition:

- "admission to" a crime involving a minor has been added to the criteria for prohibiting a person from serving as a volunteer.
- Mississippi and Oregon have been added to the list of states known to require background checks in addition to those required by Little League.

REGULATION I(K)

REGULATION CHANGE

Baseball and Softball

As before, Regulation I(j) stipulates that, where two or more leagues combine at the Junior level or above, the leagues "shall each elect a vice president and player agent to be in charge of the league(s)."

Regulation I(k) used to stipulate that the vice presidents "and will alternate every other year as senior vice president in charge of the program. The off-year vice president will serve as assistant to the vice president in charge." This requirement has been removed.

REGULATION II(F)

CLARIFICATION

Baseball and Softball

Regulation II(f) used to state:

"When necessary the District Administrator shall have the authority to adjust the league boundaries and be subject to review and approval of the Charter Committee."

It now is phrased

"When necessary the District Administrator shall have the authority to recommend adjusting the league boundaries and be subject to review and approval of the Charter Committee."

to emphasize that only the Charter Committee can approve league boundary changes.

REGULATION III(A)

RECOMMENDATION

Baseball and Softball

Regulation III(a) now includes an explicit recommendation that a roster size of 8-10 players is recommended at the Tee Ball and Minor League levels.

REGULATION IV(A)

REGULATION CHANGE

Baseball Only

The date as of which a baseball player's league age is determined has been changed. The regulation includes details of the implementation plan, which involves grandfathering certain players. The rulebook also includes detailed charts in Appendix G to help leagues confirm a player's proper league age.

REGULATION VI

REGULATION CHANGE

Softball Only

The rest requirements for softball pitchers have changed.

Regulation VI(b) used to read:

Minors/Little League (Majors): A player may pitch in a maximum of twelve (12) innings in a game.

It now reads

Minors/Little League (Majors): A player may pitch in a maximum of twelve (12) innings in a day.

Also, while the text in Regulation VI(b) still says that "If a player pitches in seven (7) or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest is mandatory," the table that follows has been modified in a matter inconsistent with this – several, but not all, of the entries show two days of rest instead of one. It is believed that the "one day of rest" is correct, and that the table should read:

Column A	Column B
Sunday	<u>Tuesday</u>
Monday	Wednesday
Tuesday	Thursday
Wednesday	Friday
Thursday	Saturday
Friday	<u>Sunday</u>
Saturday	Monday

The underlines above show where the incorrect entries in the rulebook are, and show the correct values.

REGULATION VI

CLARIFICATION

Softball Only

The underlined text has been added to Regulation VI(c):

(c) 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. A pitcher, withdrawn from the game offensively or defensively for a substitute, may not re-enter the game as a pitcher. Exception: See Rule 3.03(c).

This appears to be an attempt to clarify what is meant by "remaining in the game" earlier in the regulation. Rule 3.03 and the Tournament pitching rules have had similar editorial changes.

REGULATION VII

CLARIFICATION

Baseball and Softball

The underlined text has been added to Regulations VII(a) and VII(b):

- (a) The schedule of games for the regular season shall be prepared by the Board of Directors of the league (or district, if the Senior/Big League is administered as a district operation) and must provide for not less than twelve (12) 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.

This would appear to prohibit a team counting games against non-Little League teams as part of their required 12 game schedule.

- (b) The schedule should provide for not less than two (2) games per week per team. Any facility used for practices and/or games must be approved by the local league Board of Directors. Junior League: Interleague play is permitted provided the proper form is submitted to the District Administrator for approval. Senior/Big League: Interleague play is permitted within the district.

This would appear to prohibit a team from practicing at a non-league site without approval from the league.

REGULATION X

CORRECT AN OMISSION

Softball Only

The underlined text has been added to Regulation X:

- (a) Little League (Major) Division, Minor League, Tee Ball, Junior, Senior, and Big League games may be played after sundown under artificial lights.

This brings the softball rulebook in line with the baseball one and with common practice.

REGULATION XIII

REGULATION CHANGE

Baseball and Softball

The underlined text has been added to Regulation XIII(f):

- Once a Tournament Team plays its first game in the International Tournament, a reference to a company, product, or service (including, but not limited to, a slogan or logo) shall not be added to, included on, or appear on any Tournament Team uniform, apparel, or equipment.

This would now appear to effectively prohibit any sponsorship display on Tournament team uniforms.

RULE 1.04

RULE CHANGE

Softball Only

The underlined text has been added to Rule 1.04:

- The distance from home base to the nearest fence, stand or other obstruction in fair territory should be 200 feet or more. A distance of 200 feet or more along the foul lines, and to center field is recommended. The outfield fence must be a minimum of 180 feet and a maximum of 225 feet from home plate.

Previously, the rule recommended 200 feet, but did not establish minimum or maximum distances. A corresponding change also appears in the tournament section of the rulebook.

RULE 1.10

CLARIFICATION

Baseball Only

The following text has been added to the portion of Rule 1.10 governing Intermediate and Junior leagues:

- If a 2¼ barrel bat has no composite materials in the barrel, it may be used provided it is labeled with a BPF (bat performance factor) of 1.15 or less.

This brings the interpretation of what constitutes a “composite bat” in line with the interpretation for Majors. Note that the rule, as written, still does not allow a composite bat that is licensed and approved for Major play to be used

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in Intermediate or Junior play. As written, the rule still bans all 2¼-inch diameter composite barrel bats in these divisions unless the bat meets the BBCOR standard. What this changes does do is to allow non-composite-barrel bats that are legal in Majors to be used in Intermediate and Juniors without the BBCOR requirement. Previously, a bat that had a composite handle and alloy barrel could be legal in Majors, but not in Intermediate or Juniors.

RULE 1.10

RULE CHANGE

Baseball Only

The following text has been added to Rule 1.10:

NOTE: Beginning with the 2018 season, non-wood and laminated bats used in the Little League (league age 12 and below), Intermediate (50-70) Division, and Junior League shall bear the USA Baseball logo signifying that the bat meets the USA Baseball Performance Standard. All BPF – 1.15 bats will be prohibited beginning with the 2018 season. Additionally, starting in 2018, the bat diameter shall not exceed 2 5/8 for these divisions of play.

This provides advance warning that Little League will be moving away from the BPF standard in 2018.

RULE 3.03

CLARIFICATION

Softball Only

The following text has been added to Rule 3.03(c):

- (c) 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. 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.

A corresponding change is made in 3.03(b) in the Big League rules:

- (b) A pitcher, withdrawn from the game for a substitute offensively or defensively, may not re-enter the game as a pitcher. (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.)

This helps clarify the issue mentioned in Regulation VI(c).

RULE 4.15

RULE CHANGE

Baseball and Softball

The following text has been added to Rule 4.15(6):

4.15 - A game may be forfeited by the Umpire-in-Chief of the game in progress to the opposing team when a team –

- (6) employs tactics designed to delay, shorten, or make a travesty of the game.

RULE 8.01

CLARIFICATION

Softball Only

Several items in 8.01 have been rewritten slightly to make it clearly as to the exact sequence associated with a pitcher taking the rubber and beginning her delivery. The underlined text indicates where edits have been made:

- (c) The shoulders shall be in line with first and third bases. When taking the pitching position, the pitcher must have his/her hands separated and must have the ball in either the glove or the pitching hand.
- (d) Prior to pitching, the pitcher shall take a position with his/her pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. This contact must be on or partially on the top surface of the pitcher's plate. The non-pivot foot must be on or behind the pitcher's plate.
- (e) While on the pitching plate, the pitcher shall take the signal or appear to be taking a signal with the hands separated. The ball must remain in either the glove or pitching hand.

- (f) After completing (e) above, the pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before starting the delivery.

This reworking makes it quite clear that it is not legal for a pitcher to take her position on the rubber with her hands already together.

RULE 9.05

CONSISTENCY

Softball Only

The underlined text was inserted into Rule 9.05(c).

- (c) After receiving the umpire's report that a manager, coach, or player has been disqualified, the league president shall require such manager, coach, or player to appear before at least three members of the Board of Directors to explain their conduct. In the case of a player, the manager shall appear with the player in the capacity of an advisor. The members of the Board present at the meeting shall impose such penalty as they feel is justified. NOTE: The Board may impose such penalties that it feels are warranted, but may not lessen the requirements of Rule 4.07.

This merely makes the softball rule read identically to the baseball rule. (The 2015 softball version was badly edited.)

TOURNAMENT ELIGIBILITY

CHANGE

Baseball and Softball

The underlined text was inserted into portion of the tournament rules describing what a Tournament team is required to have in its possession:

2. a map, signed and dated by the league president and District Administrator, showing the actual boundaries of the league, with locations noted for the residences of the parent or legal guardian (court-appointed) or location of the school for every participant named on the affidavit;

The requirements for league schedules in the League Eligibility section have also changed. Previously, the rulebook said:

- 2) The league must have scheduled and played, at a minimum, a 12-game (per team) regular season exclusive of playoffs and tournament games for each division entering tournament. See Reg. VII. The schedule shall be arranged so that at least one-half of the games are scheduled prior to June 15.

Now it reads

- 2) The league must have scheduled and played, at a minimum, a 12-game (per team) regular season, exclusive of playoffs and tournament games, for each division entering tournament prior to the first game in their respective tournament. See Reg. VII.

TOURNAMENT PITCHING

CLARIFICATION

Softball Only

Consistent with the other clarifications made with respect to pitchers leaving the mound and then returning, the Junior/Senior/Big League pitching section has been amended as follows:

- d. 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. If a pitcher is removed from the game and is returned to the pitching position, it will be ruled as an improper substitution. Penalty: See Rule 10(f).

And, under the substitution section:

- f. Improper substitution is a basis for protest. Protests involving improper substitution not resolved before the next pitch or play shall not be considered. Junior/Senior/Big League: Ineligible pitcher under 1) a Tournament pitcher pitches during the regular season or special games concurrently, 2) a Tournament pitcher is removed from the lineup and then is returned as pitcher later in the game, or 3) a Tournament pitcher moves to another defensive position twice and then returns as pitcher twice in the same inning, will be considered an improper substitution.