
LITTLE LEAGUE RULE CHANGES FOR 2013 SEASON

The following is a summary of the changes between the 2013 Little League Baseball and Softball rules and their 2012 counterparts. Items have been loosely categorized as to whether the change represents a clarification from the previous year, or whether it represents an actual rule change or new rule. Note that the items listed here deal with on-field play. Regulation changes that are administration-related are not listed here.

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

CLARIFICATION

Previously, the rules frequently used the term “put out” as in “a runner is put out.” This has, in most places, been replaced by the term “retired.” “Retired” is, of course, a more general term, and includes situations in which a player is declared out by the umpire, but not “put out” by the defense. (Interference is one such example.) This affects the following rules:

- Regulation IV(i) – (mandatory play definition)
- 2.00 AT BAT
- 2.00 BATTER-RUNNER
- 3.05(a) & (b)
- 6.04
- 6.06(c) EXCEPTION
- 6.07(a-c)

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

NEW RULE(S)

Baseball only

2013 introduces the Intermediate Division of Little League Baseball, which is intended for players whose league age is 11-13. The division uses essentially all the same rules as the Junior division, but plays on fields with 70-foot base paths and a 50-foot pitching distance. Thus, all the places in the rulebook that mention the Junior division (either alone, as Junior/Senior or Junior/Senior/Big League) now also include the Intermediate division.

REGULATION III(D)

NEW RULE

The following note has been added:

NOTE 3: *If a medical professional, Umpire in Chief, the player’s coach, the player’s manager or the player’s parent has determined a player sustains a possible concussion, the player must be, at a minimum, removed from the game and/or practice for the remainder of that day. The league must also be aware of its respective state/provincial/municipal laws with regards to concussions and impose any additional requirements as necessary. His/her return to full participation is subject to 1.) the league’s adherence to its respective state/provincial/municipal laws, 2.) an evaluation and a written clearance from a physician or other accredited medical provider and 3.) written acknowledgement of the parents.*

Little League International strongly encourages all leagues and teams to not only comply with any applicable state/provincial/municipal laws, but also, to review the information and training materials on concussions that are available free of charge on the Centers For Disease Control website, accessible from the link below. This link provides concussion information from all 50 states: <http://www.littleleague.org/learn/programs/childprotection/concussions.htm>.

This change to the regulations gives umpires (among others) the authority to remove a player who appears to have sustained a possible concussion.

REGULATION V(C) – PLAYER POOLS

CLARIFICATION

Phrases have been added to this rule to explicitly restrict players who participate in the pool to playing only within their own division. Presumably this was done in order to keep, say, a Junior League player from filling a vacancy on a Major-level team.

REGULATION VI(E) – PITCHER REST REQUIREMENTS

RULE CHANGE

Baseball only

The following exception has been added to the “days of rest” requirement:

***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; 3. The third out is made to complete the half-inning. 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 before delivering a pitch to another batter.*

As an example, a Little League pitcher requires no rest if he/she throws 20 or fewer pitchers, but one day of rest if he/she throws 21-35 pitches. In 2012, if the pitcher had 18 pitches when a batter comes to the plate, the manager would have been required to change the pitcher after two pitches to avoid the rest requirement. Beginning in 2013, this pitcher will not have a rest requirement provided that he/she is removed after the at bat is complete, even if he/she crosses the 20 pitch threshold during the at bat.

This new rule also applies during Tournament play – Tournament Rule 4(e) has had the same exception added to it.

1.07 – PITCHING DISTANCE

RULE CHANGE

Softball only

The pitching distance for the Junior division has been increased from 40 feet to 43 feet, matching the distance for Seniors and Big League.

1.10 – BATS

RULE CHANGE

Baseball only

The term “composite bat” in the rule has been replaced with the term “composite barrel bat,” emphasizing the fact that it is the barrel, not the handle, that determines whether a bat is considered “composite” or “alloy.”

1.10 – BATS

RULE CHANGE

Softball only

In all division of play, non-wood bats must now be marked with a BPF (bat performance factor) of 1.20.

2.00 – ILLEGAL BAT

NEW RULE

Softball only

The softball rulebook has added a definition of the term “illegal bat,” matching that in the baseball rulebook.

3.03 – SENIOR / BIG LEAGUE DESIGNATED HITTER

REMOVAL

Item number 4 has been removed. Previously, it read:

(4) This rule does not change the regular rule governing the use of pinch-hitters.

Presumably it was felt that this was unnecessary.

5.07 – MINOR LEAGUE RUN LIMITS

CLARIFICATION

For the purposes of the Minor and Tee-Ball “inning limiting” rules, the phrase “*legally put out or when all players on the roster have batted*” has been changed to “*legally put out, called out by the umpire or when all players on the roster have batted*”

This would appear to close a minor loophole in the rule covering situations in which a player is called out by the umpire – such as for interference – but was not technically “put out” by the defense. (This seems to be the one place where the term “retired” was not introduced.)

6.05(B) – UNCAUGHT THIRD STRIKE APPROVED RULING

REORGANIZATION

The following approved ruling now appears in this rule:

APPROVED RULING (Major/Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/ Senior/Big League): *When a batter becomes a runner on a third strike that is not caught, and starts for the bench or his/her position, that batter may advance to first base at any time before entering the bench. To put the batter out, the defense must tag the batter or first base before the batter touches first base.*

This identical approved ruling previously appeared in 7.08(a). It has simply been moved from Rule 7.08 (which governs the runners) to rule 6.05 (which governs the batter).

7.13(C) – RUNNERS LEAVING EARLY

RULE CHANGE

Baseball only

This rule has been modified to add “*or advances on an uncaught third strike*” to the situations covered by this rule.

Thus, if the bases are loaded with two outs, the batter-runner and the other runners advance on an uncaught third strike, but one or more runners left before the pitch reached the batter, no run scores on the play.

8.01(F) – AMBIDEXTROUS PITCHERS

NEW RULE

Baseball only

The following rule has been added governing ambidextrous pitchers:

8.01(f) A pitcher must indicate visually to the umpire-in-chief, the batter and any runners the hand with which he/she intends to pitch, which may be done by wearing his/her glove on the other hand while touching the pitcher's plate. The pitcher is not permitted to pitch with the other hand until the batter is retired, the batter becomes a runner, the inning ends, the batter is substituted for by a pinch-hitter or the pitcher incurs an injury. In the event a pitcher switches pitching hands during an at-bat because he/she has suffered an injury, the pitcher may not, for the remainder of the game, pitch with the hand from which he/she has switched. The pitcher shall not be given the opportunity to throw any preparatory pitches after switching pitching hands. Any change of pitching hands must be indicated clearly to the umpire-in-chief.

Previously, there was no restriction on when or how a pitcher might switch from right-handed to left-handed or vice versa.

TOURNAMENT ROSTER SIZE

RULE CHANGE

Softball only

Senior League Tournament teams may now have a maximum of 16 players. Big League Tournament teams may now have a maximum of 17 players. Previously, the limits were 14 and 15, respectively. The new limits now match the corresponding ones in baseball.

TOURNAMENT RULE 3(A) – ILLEGAL BAT

RULE CHANGE

Tournament Rule 3 has been rewritten to provide the penalty for the use of an illegal bat:

- 3(a). In all Tournament levels and divisions, the penalty for use of an illegal bat [see Rule 6.06 (d)], if discovered before the next player enters the batter's box following the turn at bat of the player who used an illegal bat, is:*
- i. The batter is out (NOTE: The manager of the defense may advise the plate umpire of a decision to decline this portion of the penalty and accept the play. Such election shall be made immediately at the end of the play), and;*
 - ii. The manager of the team will be ejected from the game, the batter who violated the rule will be ejected from the game, and the offensive team will lose one eligible adult base coach for the duration of the game.*

Previously, Rule 6.06(d) governed the use of an illegal bat during both regular season and tournament play. Rule 6.06(d) stipulates that the batter is out, and that the manager is only ejected for the second violation. Thus, in 2013 tournament play, the penalty is harsher – the batter and the manager are ejected.

TOURNAMENT RULE 9 – MANDATORY PLAY

RULE CHANGE

The rule has been changed to read:

9. *MANDATORY PLAY: 9-10 Year Old Division, 10-11 Year Old Division, Little League, Intermediate (50-70) Division, Junior League: If a tournament team has thirteen (13) or more eligible players in uniform at a game, then every player on a team roster shall participate in each game for a minimum of one (1) at bat. If a tournament has twelve (12) or fewer eligible players in uniform at a game, then every player on a team roster shall participate in each game for a minimum of six (6) consecutive defensive outs and bat at least one (1) time.*

In 2012, a team with 13 or more eligible players was required to get each player one at bat and three consecutive defensive outs. In 2013, a team with 13 or more eligible players is no longer required to have all its players play defensively – it is permissible for certain players to participate offensively but not defensively. The rule is unchanged for teams with 12 or fewer players.