
LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL RULE CHANGES FOR 2014 SEASON

The following is a summary of the changes between the 2014 Little League Softball rules and their 2013 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.

REGULATION II

REGULATION CHANGE

Residency requirements have been changed to allow players to play for a league whose boundaries include the school that they attend.

REGULATION IV

CONSISTENCY

The phrase “with amateur status” has been added to the eligibility requirements for all levels of play. Previously, this phrase was only explicitly included for the Big League division.

A matching change has been made in the “Player Eligibility” section of the Tournament Rules.

REGULATION XIV(E)

RULE CHANGE

Possession of firearms on the playing field, benches or dugouts is now expressly prohibited. The rule also now explicitly mentions “cigarettes” in addition to “tobacco.”

1.10 – BATS

CLARIFICATION

Note 3 has been amended to read:

Bats that have cracks or sharp edges, or that cannot pass through the approved Little League bat ring for the appropriate division must be removed from play.

Previously there was no explicit prohibition on bats that were cracked or had sharp edges – only the “bat ring requirement” was explicitly in the book.

1.16 – HELMETS

CLARIFICATION

The rule now includes:

Use of a helmet by an adult base coach *or any defensive player* is optional.

The phrase “or any defensive player” was added, indicating that Little League does not prohibit a defensive player from wearing a protective helmet.

2.00 PIVOT FOOT

CLARIFICATION

The definition of “pivot foot” was amended slightly, to read:

The pitcher’s **PIVOT FOOT** is that foot which is in contact with the pitcher’s plate *prior to pushing off*, as opposed to the non-pivot foot with which the pitcher steps toward home plate.

The italicized phrase was added, since it is legal for a pitcher to drag his/her foot off the pitching plate as part of the delivery.

4.07 – EJECTIONS

CLARIFICATION

The rule was amended to indicate that a manager, coach or player suspended as a result of an ejection may not participate in pregame or postgame activities in addition to the game itself.

The same change was made in the corresponding Tournament Rules (9c and 17).

4.19(A) - PROTESTS

CONSISTENCY

An exception was added to 4.19(a). The rule now reads:

- (a) Protest shall be considered only when based on the violation or interpretation of a playing rule, use of an ineligible pitcher or the use of an ineligible player. No protest shall be considered on a decision involving an umpire's judgment. Equipment which does not meet specifications must be removed from the game.

Exception: *Illegal bat [see Rule 6.06 (d)].*

The exception for an illegal bat was added, since there is now a penalty associated with that, as opposed to the bat simply being removed.

5.09(C) – ILLEGAL PITCH

CLARIFICATION

The rule has been amended to read:

5.09 - The ball becomes dead and runners advance one base, or remain on their bases, without liability to be put out, when -

- (c) an illegal pitch is committed (see Penalty 8.05). *The ball is dead at the end of playing action, if the ball is pitched;*

The italicized phrase was added, making this paragraph consistent with the fact that an illegal pitch which is delivered to the batter may still be batted by the offense.

6.05(B) – THIRD STRIKE NOT CAUGHT

CLARIFICATION

The approved ruling has been amended to read:

APPROVED RULING: 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 *dugout or any other dead ball area*. To put the batter out, the defense must tag the batter or first base before the batter touches first base.

Previously, the term “bench” was used in place of the italicized text.

6.06(C) – ILLEGAL ACTION BY THE BATTER

CLARIFICATION

The rule was reworded as follows:

6.06 - A batter is out for illegal action when -

- (c) interfering with the catcher's fielding or throwing by:
- 1) stepping out of the batter's box, or;
 - 2) making any other movement that hinders the catcher's *actions at home plate or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner, or;*
 - 3) *failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate a congested area when there is a throw to home plate and there is time for the batter to move away.*

Previously, the rule simply read:

- (c) interfering with the catcher's fielding or throwing by stepping out of the batter's box or making any other movement that hinders the catcher's play at home base.

The new wording helps clarify the batter's responsibilities, particularly in the case where a play is being made on a runner coming home.

7.01

RULE CHANGE

The rule has been amended as follows:

7.01 - A runner acquires the right to an unoccupied base when that runner touches it before being retired. The runner is then entitled to it until put out or forced to vacate it for another runner legally entitled to that base. If a runner legally acquires title to a base, and the pitcher *has control of the ball within the eight (8) foot radius circle and is not making a play*, the runner may not return to a previously occupied base.

Little League Softball Rule Changes For 2014 Season

Previously, the italicized phrase read “assumes his/her pitching position.” Under a strict reading of the previous version of the rule, the “8 foot circle rule” applied to a runner advancing, but not necessarily retreating. This change brings this paragraph into consistency with 7.08(a) in this respect.