

# D13 Little League Rules Meeting for the 2026 International Tournament

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*Presented by*



# 2026 Rule Updates

# RULE 1.10 Note 2 Pine Tar

- Pine tar and like substances are now “legal” substances on BAT HANDLES ONLY
- Only permitted on handle or grip of the bat (cannot be added to barrel or taper of the bat and cannot cover the certification logo)
- When pine tar is discovered on a surface not permitted (e.g., helmets)...
  - Item is removed
  - First offense results in warning
  - Second offense results in player AND manager being ejected
  - When pine tar is discovered, it does NOT nullify any playing action and does NOT result in an illegal bat penalty

# Rule 4.04 Note 2

- Clarifies if a player is unable to complete an at-bat (plate appearance) due to *injury, illness or ejection*. The next batter in the line up takes their place and assumes the count.
- If a player is unable to run the bases, the player who recorded the last out will replace that player on the bases.
  - NOTE: If player is a pitcher or catcher, the Courtesy Runner rule will still apply

# Safety & Equipment

# Equipment Checks

- Umpires are not responsible for equipment checks:
  - Helmets
  - Bats
  - Catcher's gear (dangling throat guard)



*It shall be the duty of the team manager to ensure all equipment is legal and proper for play according to Little League rules.*

**PENALTY:** If illegal equipment is used during the game, the manager of the team will be ejected. The player utilizing the illegal equipment shall also be ejected. BOTH manager and player shall serve a 1 game suspension.

# Rule 6.06(d)

## Batter enters batter's box with an illegal bat

- Batter is out
- Manager and player are ejected
- Offense loses one adult base coach for the remainder of the game

## If illegal bat is identified after batter uses it

- In addition to the above penalties,
  - All runners return to previous base, *unless defense elects the results of the play*

# Rule 1.10

## Baseball non-wood bats

8-10 9-11 10-12	Intermediate Juniors	Seniors
USABat	USABat or BBCOR	BBCOR

Rule 1.10 – A.R.2: No bat in any level of Little League Baseball/Softball is permitted to be altered. Products such as, but not limited to **choke-knobs, or choke up assists** are considered alterations or modifications to the bat and are not permitted.



# Rule 1.11

Any part of the pitchers exposed undershirt must be of a solid color

- Not white or gray

Neoprene is allowed on pitcher provided

- One solid color
- Not white or gray

# Rule 1.11

- Defensive players may wear play calling bands
- Must be on wrist or forearm
- Pitchers may only wear on glove hand
  - Solid color
  - Not white, gray, or optic yellow

# Rule 1.11(j)

- Rule 1.11(j): Any jewelry worn by a player that poses harm to injury will be subject to removal.
- **Exception:** Medical alerts permitted



# Rule 1.15(a)

- The pitcher's glove may not, exclusive of the piping, be white or light gray, nor, in the judgement of an umpire, distracting in any manner.

If the pitcher's glove has more white or light gray than just the piping, it will not be allowed



# Rule 1.16

- Use of a helmet is required for all batters, base runners and non-adult base coaches
- Helmets may not
  - be repainted
  - contain tape or re-applied decals
  - have a mirror-like finish
  - No stickers that is excessive in usage, offensive or has inappropriate references (drugs/alcohol)



# Rule 1.17

- Dangling throat guards are required at all levels of play whenever a catcher's mask is required
- *There are NO exceptions*
- This includes
  - Hockey mask style helmets
  - Masks with wire extensions



# Rule 1.17

- Catcher's masks are required:
  - Any form of infield/outfield practice
  - Pitcher warm up
  - Games



# On-Deck Batter (during play)

- 8-10 / 9-11 / Little League
  - The on-deck batter is not allowed, at any time, regardless of field design or presence of a safe area.
- Intermediate / Juniors / Seniors
  - The on-deck batter is permitted

# Electronic Equipment

- A manager or coach is permitted to use ONE WAY electronic devices from the dugout to the catcher.
  - To the catcher ONLY
  - Must be inside the dugout when utilizing it
  - One way: no air pods, apple watches, radios etc.
  - ***IF UTILIZED, PLEASE NOTIFY UMPIRES AT TIME OF PLATE MEETING***
- Team shall be provided reasonable amount of time to correct malfunctioning electronic communication (no visit shall be charged)

# Rule Differences Between Regular Season and Tournament

# Rules

- No local rules are to be used
- All rules are per the Little League Official Playing Rules
- Local “ground rules” still apply
  - Field conditions
  - Establishment of live ball/dead ball territory

# Warming up the Pitcher

Regular Season	Tournament
Managers or coaches may warm up the pitcher	Managers or coaches may <u>NOT</u> warm up the pitcher at any place or any time

# Batting Order

Regular Season	Tournament
<p>Continuous batting order is a league option</p>	<p>Continuous batting order required</p> <p>All players present at start of game</p> <p>Does not apply to Senior League</p>

# Game Duration

Regular Season	Tournament
<p data-bbox="188 461 715 525">Shortened games</p> <ul data-bbox="188 568 682 822" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="188 568 570 625">• Time limits</li><li data-bbox="188 672 682 822">• Drop dead League options</li></ul>	<p data-bbox="1294 461 1939 525">Full regulation games</p> <p data-bbox="1294 568 1717 625">No time limits</p> <ul data-bbox="1294 672 1913 1011" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1294 672 1913 822">• 8-10 / 9-11 / 11-12<ul data-bbox="1386 768 1671 822" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1386 768 1671 822">• 6 innings</li></ul></li><li data-bbox="1294 861 1837 1011">• Juniors / Seniors<ul data-bbox="1386 958 1671 1011" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1386 958 1671 1011">• 7 innings</li></ul></li></ul>

# “Mercy” Rule

Regular Season	Tournament
<p>15 run lead after 3 innings 10 run lead after 4 innings 8 run lead after 5 innings League options</p>	<p>15 run lead after 3 innings 10 run lead after 4 innings  <b><i>In effect, not optional</i></b></p>

# Mandatory Play

*For purposes of Mandatory Play during the Tournament*

- The definition of At-Bat in regard to completing an At-Bat after a player is retired as a batter; retired as a batter-runner; reaches base and scores; or reaches base and the inning/game ends, does not apply in tournament play.
- Effect: Courtesy runners can be used for pitcher and catcher (with two outs) at any time they reach base.

# Other Tournament Rules

# Who's the Home Team?

- For all games, home team is determined by a coin toss.
- Coin toss shall be performed by an authorized representative of the Tournament Director.
- Home team shall occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup> base dugout

# Managers and Coaches

- A maximum of three (3) adults, who are named on the official affidavit **will be permitted on the field** and act as managers/coaches for that game.
  - The official manager for the game is the one who is present at the plate meeting.
  - Umpires will only have discussions with managers during the game.
- The adults must be listed in the affidavit or must be authorized temporary replacements as noted on the affidavit.
- Base coaches may be adults or players.
- One adult must remain in the dugout at all times.

# Number of Players

- Teams must have at least 9 players to start the game
  - *The game is considered started at the plate meeting*
- Teams must have at least 9 players to continue the game
- If, at any time, a team has less than 9 players, the game will be suspended and be referred to the tournament committee.

# Mandatory Play

Regular Season	Tournament
<p>Each player shall have a minimum of 1 at-bat and play 6 defensive outs</p>	<p>Use of Continuous Batting Order</p> <p>Everyone bats</p> <p>No defensive requirement</p>

# Continuous Batting Order

- If a player is not at the field at the beginning of the game, that player shall be added at the bottom of the line-up upon arrival.
- Should a player be absent from the game at the time of their scheduled at-bat, the spot in the line-up will be skipped, with no penalty to the offensive team.

# Courtesy Runner

- Each team is allowed the use of a courtesy runner
  - For pitcher or catcher OF RECORD only, and only with two outs
  - Runner must be the player in the batting order who made the last out (can still be used if both pitcher and catcher are on base with two outs)... If last batted out is the pitcher and you want a CR for catcher, the pitcher must run... avoid this by separating your pitcher and catcher in the line up?!

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike Not Caught

	Less than 2 Outs		2 Outs
	1st Base Occupied		
Age	Yes	No	
8-10	Batter is Out		
All Other	Batter is Out	Batter becomes Runner	

# One Foot in the Batter's Box

- If the batter leaves the batter's box or delays play and none of the exceptions apply, the umpire shall warn the batter.
  - *This is umpire judgment*
- After one warning on the batter, the umpire shall call a strike.
- Any number of strikes can be called until the batter re-enters the batter's box, or until the third strike is called.

# Intentional Base on Balls

- If the defensive team wishes to give the batter an intentional base on balls:
  - Manager must request time and inform plate umpire
  - No pitches need to be thrown, but any remaining pitches to reach four balls will be added to pitch count
  - Batter will be awarded first base
    - *The ball is dead - - no other runners may advance (unless forced)*

# Intentional Base on Balls

- An “unpitched” intentional base on balls is allowed to each player only once per game
- All other intentional walks requires pitches to be thrown

# Pitching Limitations

- Under no circumstances shall a player pitch in three (3) consecutive days
- Maximum number of pitches in a calendar day

Age	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-16
Maximum Pitches per Day	50	75	85	95

- Note that the limitation is based on league age and not level of play

# Days Rest - Baseball

- Mandatory days rest based on pitch count, and level of play

Age	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
Juniors and Below	0	1	2	3	4

- If the pitcher reaches a days of rest threshold while facing a batter, the pitcher will only be required to observe the calendar days of rest for the threshold he/she achieved prior to the at bat.
- Example:
  - A pitcher has thrown 33 pitches. The next batter comes in and fouls off 10 pitches before he gets a base hit. The manager removes the pitcher. The pitcher is required to rest 1 day.

# Switching Pitchers and Catchers - Baseball

- Any player that has caught 4 or more innings is not eligible to pitch that calendar day
- Any player that has caught 3 or more innings *and* thrown 21 or more pitches cannot return to catcher that calendar day
- Any player that has thrown 41 or more pitches cannot catch that calendar day (subject to the threshold exceptions)
- *NOTE: A single pitch shall constitute an inning*

# Extra Innings (no 1 extra regular inning)

- If at the end of regulation, the score is tied, the following will be applied to that, and each subsequent, inning:
- The next scheduled batter shall bat and is considered the first batter for that inning.
- The last scheduled batter for that inning shall be placed at 2<sup>nd</sup> base.

# Points of Emphasis

# Unsportsmanlike Behavior

- Bat Flips

- Flipping the bat, or other demonstrations, are considered unsportsmanlike behavior and can result in ejection.

- Throwing Equipment

- Throwing or slamming down equipment is also considered unsportsmanlike behavior.

**Just don't do it!**

# Player Decorum

## Eye Black



Allowed



Not Allowed

Uniforms – all players must have same uniform. Jerseys are to be tucked in.





# Must Slide Rule

- There is no “must-slide” rule . . . It does not exist
- Runner must:
  - Slide
  - Avoid
  - Retreat
  - Surrender

# Base Coach's Box

- Base Coaches are required to stay in their box, unless necessary to avoid being in the play
- Base coaches must also provide a working area for the umpires

# Calling Time

- No player or manager can call “time-out”
  - Players and managers *request* a time-out
  - Only Umpires can call a time-out
- Umpires are under no obligation to grant a time-out request
- Umpires will not grant requests for time-out to kill the play, or to protect runners
- Do not enter the field of play until time has been called and permission has been granted by the umpire

# Defensive Visits

- The manager may request time and visit with any member of the defense.
- A visit with ANY member of the defense is a charged visit to the pitcher.
- On the 2<sup>nd</sup> charged visit in any inning, the pitcher MUST be removed.
- On the 3<sup>rd</sup> charged visit during the game, the pitcher MUST be removed.
  - *Visits start over upon change of pitcher.*
  - *8/9/10 – 3<sup>rd</sup> charged visit in an inning or 4<sup>th</sup> in a game*

# Defensive Visits

- Injury visits do not count as charged visits, however . . .
- If an umpire hears any discussion other than the status of the injury and the health of the player, the visit will count as a charged visit.
  - *Yes . . . the umpires will accompany the manager during the injury visit*
- *Side note: should a player come out of the game due to injury or illness, that player cannot return without written clearance from trained medical personnel*

# Appeals

- Appeals must be made during a live-ball situation
- Appeals must be made before the next pitch or play
- Appeals will NOT be considered for umpire judgment



# Asking for Help

- By rule, umpire judgment cannot be appealed or protested
- However, umpires want all calls to be correct . . .

# Asking for Help

- Should you wish to discuss a call with an umpire
  - Request time - - - from any umpire
  - When granted time, approach the umpire *who made the call*
  - Discuss the issue
  - Return to dugout and await the decision

# Asking for Help

- Asking for help for judgement is not a valid question.  
*“Hey blue, I think he was safe. Can you get some help?”*
- Asking for help because of something factual may be considered  
*“I think the 1<sup>st</sup> baseman pulled his foot”*
- Remember, the umpires will get the call right as best as possible... Be kind courteous and approachable and you will be treated the same way.

# Protests

- Protests for improper rule application must be made before next pitch or play  
*If a protest is filed, play will cease until a ruling is made*
- Protests for the use of an ineligible player must be made prior to the next game  
*The use of an ineligible player shall result in the team being disqualified and removed from the International Tournament*
- Protests will NOT be considered for rulings involving umpire judgment

# Protest Procedure

- Manager requests time and informs an umpire of a RULE being protested.
- Umpires on field will confer and present on field ruling to manager.
- Manager decides, “I don’t agree” can request escalation.
- Umpires will confer with tournament director for a ruling.
- Manager decides, “I don’t agree” can request escalation.
- Tournament director will call West Region Headquarters for a ruling.
- Manager decides, “I don’t agree” can request escalation.
- Tournament director wakes up someone in Williamsport and gets ruling.
- Williamsport ruling is final

**NOTE: Procedure can be stopped at any time by manager protesting by withdrawing protest or accepting the ruling**

# Between Innings

- Pitcher has up to one (1) minute or up to eight (8) warm-up pitches
  - The clock starts upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> out
- Leadoff batter *only* is permitted in front of their dugout
- Managers/coaches are not allowed in fair ball territory
- Base coaches must stay in their dugouts until catcher throws to 2<sup>nd</sup> base

# Inclement Weather Protocol

- Weather will be monitored by the Tournament Staff
- Should the game be delayed for lightning :
  - Immediately proceed to a safe area
  - Cars or buildings
- **Do not leave the ballpark.**
- Managers will be contacted by the Tournament Director.

Good Luck!