

2024 - NBLL Softball Junior Division Operational Bylaws

Little League Softball Official Regulations and Playing Rules apply to all NBLL activities. The Local NBLL Bylaws and Ground Rules detailed below are in addition to Little League regulations and pertain to the NBLL Softball Juniors division. At the discretion of a quorum of the executive board, the by-laws can be changed at any time. Any questions, concerns, or clarifications regarding these bylaws should be directed to the Division VP and the Executive Board of Directors.

Manager Selection

- The Manager Selection Committee will comprise the President, the Vice-Presidents of all leagues, the Player Agent, and anyone else the President deems helpful in selecting the slate of managers.
- The Manager Selection Committee shall interview and investigate prospective managers and coaches and recommend acceptable candidates to the President for appointment and subsequent approval by the Board of Directors.
- Candidates must submit a volunteer application before the Manager Selection Meeting to be considered for a managerial position.
- Little League International requires all potential Managers to have a background check performed on them before taking a team.
- All Managers and Coaches are required to wear closed-toed shoes and complete the Little League Diamond Leader Training.

Manager Assignment to Teams

- Once the number of teams has been determined and an equal number of managers have been approved, the President and Vice-President will determine which managers are paired with which teams.
 - Returning managers with a team from the previous year will automatically be assigned to their team.
 - The remaining selected managers will be assigned a team.
 - Of the remaining selected managers, a random drawing will be conducted to determine which managers are assigned to which teams unless a manager has a direct tie to one of the open teams.
- Managers with a “direct tie” to a team will be assigned based on the following criteria:
 1. Served as an “official,” uniformed assistant coach of an open team the previous year.

OR

 2. Has a child who is a returning player to an open team.
- If it is determined that a selected manager is directly tied to an open team, said manager will be assigned to that team.
- If a selected manager has a child on an existing roster that has an approved manager returning to it, said child will remain on their previous year’s roster until the draft is completed. At that time, a trade will be agreed upon by both managers, bringing the child to the parent’s team.

Teams

- The Teams will consist of players age 13 and 14; however, one player age 12 may play for each team.
- All draft-eligible players must try out and enter the draft system.
- Once assigned to a team through the draft process returning Junior players are the property of that team (unless a specific exception is granted as a "Special Assignment", see below).
- All Junior division teams will have no more than 12 players.
 - Teams may have less depending on the number of players that register.
- Should a returning Junior player sign up late, and if a position on the 12-person roster for her team is open, that player will be assigned to her previous team.
 - If a spot is not open, that late registrant may be placed on any team having an open roster position.

- If all teams have 12 players on their roster and a new player registers late, that player will be placed on a waiting list until a position on one of the Junior teams 12 12-man roster is open.

The Draft

- All players, except for sons or daughters of the managers, will be assigned to a Juniors team through the draft process (i.e., no "protection" of players will occur).
- The Juniors League draft will take place on the date set forth by the league.
- The draft will be the reverse order of the standings of the previous year.
- The team finishing the previous season in last place will pick first, and the first-place team will pick last.
- Before beginning the draft process, each Manager will have their daughter assigned to their team as follows:
 - If their player is league age 14, that player will be a 3rd-round selection
 - If their player is league age 13, that player will be a 4th-round selection
- Players that do not try out will be "hat picks."
- In the event of expansion or contraction of the number of Juniors teams by the League, procedures outlined in the Official Little League Operations Manual will be followed.

Game Preliminaries

- If a team has less than nine players, they are encouraged to play the game as scheduled.
 - Teams may use other registered players from the division to fill in; however, these players are not allowed to pitch.
- The teams will occupy the dugout that matches the scoreboard.
- The home team must supply one adult to serve as Scoreboard Operator.
- The Visiting team must supply an adult (over 15 years) to serve as the Official Scorekeeper.
 - The Scorekeeper must keep the official book in the press box.
- The scorekeeper and Scoreboard Operator are neutral and must not alert anyone to either team of any infractions or if a player is batting out of order.
- The Officer on Duty on game day will determine if these individuals are present at the beginning of the game and that they are performing their tasks during the game.
- Failure of a team to supply adults to provide these functions will result in game suspension until such individuals are in place.
- Should a game not start on time due to the failure of a team to provide Scorekeeper and/or Scoreboard Operator, and if the time exceeds the time allotted for play to begin (i.e., 15 minutes), that team will forfeit the game.
- The league will make every attempt to provide paid umpires for every game.
- If umpires do not show up, it is the responsibility of the fielding team to supply an umpire.
- The plate Umpire will record the starting time with the official scorekeeper.
 - Any unavoidable delay of more than 15 minutes will result in rescheduling the game.
- Before starting a game, each Manager must furnish a physical (not electronic) copy of their lineup to (1) the opposing Manager and (2) the Official Scorekeeper.
 - This lineup must show (1) both the first and last name of each player, (2) player number, and (3) the position each player will occupy at the start of the game.
 - If pitching changes are not noted in the official scorebook, the starting pitcher is assumed to have pitched a complete game based on the official book.
 - If all the above information is not supplied on the line-up, the manager, the Umpire, or the Official Scorekeeper may ask for play to be suspended until such information is supplied.
- Managers are responsible for the actions of dugouts, including their assistant coaches, during the game.

The Game

- All games shall begin on time.
- All games must be played when scheduled except in the cases of weather, light failure, or other circumstances beyond the control of the managers and NBLL.
 - In the event of threatening lightning or inclement weather, the Officer on Duty will be responsible for calling the game.
 - If the Lightning Prediction System's warning horn blows, teams are to clear the playing field immediately and not resume play until after the "all-clear" sound has been given and the Officer on Duty has declared the field safe for play.
 - Games may be played in less-than-ideal conditions based on the judgment of the Umpire or Officer on Duty (i.e., light rain, cold, etc.).
 - Only the Umpire or Officer on Duty may call or delay a game in these situations.
- Failure of an umpire to show does not constitute rescheduling of a game.
- Junior Division regulation games are 7 innings or 1 hour 45 minutes.
 - A Junior Division game is considered official when 5 innings (4 ½ if the home team is ahead) are completed or the time limit has expired.
 - Games can end in a tie.
 - No new inning may start after 1 hour 45 minutes.
 - No inning shall be started after the 10:30 p.m. curfew on school nights; however, all innings started before 10:30 p.m. will be completed.
- A new inning starts immediately when the third out is made in the previous inning, and there shall be no more than 2 minutes between innings.
 - If, in the judgment of the Umpire in charge of the game, either team intentionally delays the game, additional time may be added to the game clock.
- At the end of each game, teams are required to clean up the dugouts they occupied and the stands and surrounding areas of all trash. Please exit the dugout as soon as possible to allow the teams waiting to begin the next game their warm-up routines.

Lineups

- All players listed on the roster shall be in the batting lineup.
- The lineup submitted at the beginning of the game will be followed throughout the game.
- After the first pitch is thrown, if a player arrives late or has to leave the game early, the opposing Manager, Official Scorekeeper, and Umpire must be notified.
- A late-arriving player will be added to the last spot in the lineup.
- A player leaving early will simply be skipped over in the lineup.
- If that player returns during the game, they will be inserted back into their original spot in the lineup.
 - If that player returns during the game, they will be inserted back into their original spot in the lineup.

Defensive Substitutions and Base Runners

- No player shall sit more than one (1) consecutive defensive inning (i.e., players should rotate in after sitting an inning) and no more than two (2) innings total in a game.
- Managers may keep a player from playing for health or discipline reasons; However, the manager must notify the player's parent, the umpire, and the opposing team manager, before the start of the game.
 - In the case of disciplinary reasons, one of the following needs to be notified: Player Agent, VP of Division, or President.

- A manager who violates this rule shall be suspended for the next game. If this rule is violated in the Championship Playoff Game, the offending manager will not be eligible to coach or manage an All-Star team.
- One may intentionally walk a specific batter only one time in a game (i.e., one may not intentionally walk the same batter over and over again in the same game).

Run Limits

- If, in the first 3 innings, the team batting scores 5 runs, the team will take the field as if the third out of the inning has been recorded.
- If an over-the-fence home run is hit, which causes more than the 5th run to cross the plate, those runs will count for that half-inning.
- If, after 5 innings (4 1/2, if the home team is ahead), one team is ahead by 10 runs or more, the opposing manager will concede the game.
- If, after 6 innings (5 1/2, if the home team is ahead), one team is ahead by 8 runs or more, the opposing manager will concede the game.

Pitching

- Players that are properly equipped may warm up pitchers before or during the game.
 - Players warming up pitchers must be appropriately attired to receive pitches.
 - Pitchers are not to warm up on the mound before the home plate Umpire takes control of the game.
- Pitchers must wear an approved protective mask.
- The managers must announce all pitchers entering the game to the Umpire in Chief and the Official Scorekeeper.

Coaching

- Teams are allowed 1 manager and 2 coaches, and the players on the roster in the dugout.
- There must be 1 adult in the dugout at all times.
- At no time will coaching be allowed from outside the playing field.
 - This includes behind the home plate area (i.e., parents will not be allowed to call pitches from behind the home plate area).
 - All pitches must be called from inside the playing area through the catcher.
- The umpires may allow coaches to stand outside the fence of the dugout; however, this is solely at the discretion of the umpires in charge of the game.

Divisional Championships

At the end of the regular season, a double-elimination tournament will be held consisting of all teams in the division. The tournament bracket will be randomly assigned by draw with the division VP, League President, and one additional executive board member. The championship game will be a single game (no "if necessary" game).

Tournament Games

- During tournament games, the home team will be decided by a coin flip conducted by the OD or Division VP (not between the coaches).
- The Championship Game home team will be the team with an undefeated tournament record.
- Regular season pitching rules and run limits will apply during all playoff games, including the Championship Game.
- Time limits will apply to playoff games and the championship game.
- Teams will be allowed to play games with eight players; however, an out is called for the ninth position in the batting line-up each turn at bat.

Special Assignments:

- All Junior teams will consist of player's league age 13 & 14.
- Once assigned to teams via the Draft process (see above), returning players are the property of that team.
- Should very special circumstances exist that clearly indicate following the above rule is not in the best interest of the player, special assignment of that player to another team, division, or league may be made.
- The process will entail the player's parent petitioning the NBLL Player Agent in writing, clearly stating the reasons and/or circumstances they feel justify their request for a special assignment.
- The Player agent will apprise the NBLL Board of Directors of the situation and request.
- Both the NBLL Board of Directors and the player agent must agree the petition warrants a special assignment.
- Should either the NBLL Board of Directors or the player agent disapprove the request, no special assignment will be made.
- It should be understood that the reasons required for consideration of a special assignment are quite strict and must transcend parental opinion of the capabilities of managers, coaches, or players, including their own.

NBLL All Stars

- All Junior players that played in the regular season are eligible to be selected to an All-Star team.
- Any regular season Manager may forward any player's name for discussion during the All-Star team selection process.
- NBLL may field several different levels of All-Star teams from the Junior Division.

All-Star Managers

All-Star team Managers will be selected from regular season managers, with board approval, based upon the Divisional Tournament results and their willingness to manage an All-Star team.

The All-Star Teams

- The decision of how many All-Star teams (1, 2, 3, or more) will be fielded will be made by the consensus between the NBLL President, the NBLL Player Agent, and the Juniors Division VP.
- These All-Star teams are comprised of players from their respective age divisions.
- All All-star teams play in district tournaments that may be in New Braunfels or out-of-town.
- Due to limited roster positions, it is important that parents of All-Star players understand the time and possible monetary commitment they make when consenting to allow their child to play all-stars.

All-Star Player Selections

- All-Star player selections are age-specific.
- Regular season team Managers will meet by division and sequentially discuss eligible players from all teams.
- Following this discussion of appropriate players, all Managers will anonymously produce a written list containing their votes for a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 10 players in the age group.
- Managers may not vote for players on their team during the first round of voting.
- Should several players have the same number of votes that would place them in a tie for the last open positions on the teams, tie-breaker voting will occur among all Managers until exactly 10 players have been selected.
- Once the initial 10 players have been selected, the Managers will, in the same manner as before, vote on and rank in order the next 10 eligible players.
 - These players must be ranked in order as they will be alternates (starting at 1 and moving to 10) should any of the top-voted 12 players decide not to participate in All-Star play.

- In divisions with State or International teams, the top 10 players receiving the most votes will be invited to play on the State or international team.
- The manager selected for the team will then be able to select the final 2 or 3 roster spots from the pool of nominated players, which will be provided by the league's Player Agent.
- The number of Specials teams will determine the pool of players required to fill all rosters.

Exception for 12-year-old play on the Junior's International Team

- A manager may seek a special vote to consider a 12-year-old player eligible for Juniors All-Star play.
- In this case, by anonymous vote, a majority of the regular season managers must agree to the exception.
- Once a majority vote is passed, the exception is forwarded to the NBLL president, player agent, and divisional VP, who all must concur.
- The 12-year-old player shall then be ranked in the managers' pool for the selection of the final 3 players to the International Team.

All-Star Player Selection Confidentiality

- Only the League President, League Player Agent, and Divisional VP will know the actual voting results for All-Star Selections.
- All Discussions of player's capabilities during discussions, in the draft room, and in the All-Star selection process, including where players are selected in the draft or All-Star voting, are confidential.
 - Any violation of this confidentiality may result in a Manager being removed from their team and render them ineligible to manage or coach an All-Star team.
 - To field the very best All-Star teams to represent our League, Managers must be allowed to discuss Player potential in confidence freely.