

Rules and Regulations Changes for 2010 as Enacted at the 25th Little League International Congress

The following changes to the Rules and Regulations went into effect on March 15, 2010. These items were voted upon by the delegates (District Administrators or their appointees) at the 25th Little League International Congress, and approved by the Little League International Board of Directors for immediate implementation.

Text in *Italics* indicates a change in the rule or regulation. The text in each “Summary and Implementation,” a short explanation of the new rule or regulation, will not appear in the Rule Books.

Regulation IV – THE PLAYERS in the Baseball and Softball Rule Books has been amended to read, in part:

Tee Ball Division: Any candidate who will attain the age of 4 years before May 1 (Softball: January 1) and who will not attain the age of 8 before May 1 (Softball: January 1) of the year in question shall be eligible to compete in the Tee Ball Baseball/Softball Division (subject to the Local League Board of Directors alignment of this division). This means that a child who will be 8 years old on May 1 (Softball: January 1) or later, is eligible to play that year; a child who will be 8 years old on April 30 (Softball: December 31) or earlier will not be eligible for either Local League play or tournament play at any time during the calendar year in question.

Summary and Implementation: Beginning immediately, this allows the local league to accept league-age 4-year-olds into the Tee Ball Division. It also reduces the maximum age permitted in Tee Ball from league-age 8 to league-age 7. Any league currently with league-age 8-year-olds in the Tee Ball Division may permit those players to remain in the Tee Ball Division for the 2010 season.

Regulation IX – SPECIAL GAMES in the Baseball and Softball Rule Books has been amended to read, in part:

(f) Tournament teams may participate in Special Games only *after June 15th*.

Summary and Implementation: Beginning this season, this allows Tournament teams to participate in Special Games after June 15. It is important to note that any Special Games must first be approved in writing by the District Administrator and Regional Director before they are played. The date of announcement of tryouts and practices remains June 15. (Exception for 9-10 and 10-11 Tournament teams – The tryout/practice date is June 15 or two weeks before the first game, whichever is earlier.)

Regulation VI – PITCHERS in the Baseball Rule Book has been amended to read, in part:

(a) Any player on a regular season team may pitch. *Exception: Any player, who has played the position of catcher in four (4) or more innings in a game, is not eligible to pitch on that calendar day.*

Summary and Implementation: Beginning immediately, this prohibits a player – who has played the position of catcher in any part of four innings in a game – from being used as a pitcher at any time on that calendar day. This applies to all baseball divisions, and will apply to the International Tournament as well.

Regulation VI (k) in the Baseball Rule Book has been amended to read:

(k) Pitching in more than one game in a day:

Minor League and Little League – A player may not pitch in more than one game in a day;

Junior League and Senior League – *A player may be used as a pitcher in up to two games in a day. (Exception: If the player pitched 31 or more pitches in the first game, that player may not pitch in the second game on that day);*

Big League - A player may be used as a pitcher in up to two games in a day.

Summary and Implementation: Beginning immediately, this permits a player on a Junior League Baseball or Senior League Baseball team to pitch in two games in one day, provided the player does not deliver 31 or more pitches in the first game. The Big League regulation remains unchanged. This also will apply during the International Tournament in the Junior League Baseball and Senior League Baseball divisions.

Regulation IV – THE PLAYERS in the Softball Rule Book has been amended to read, in part:

A 12 year old player who is otherwise eligible under all conditions would be eligible for selection to either the *Major League* or Junior League Division tournament team. However, a local Little League’s board of directors could decide that players league age 12 in the league will not try out for the Junior League Division, and will be eligible for only the Little League (“Majors”) Division/Minor League Division.

A player may be selected to participate in one or more regular season games on a Major League team and/or a Junior League team. If a player participates in sixty (60) percent of the Regular Season games in each division as of June 15, he/she will be eligible to participate in either the Major or Junior Division from that point forward in regular season and/or tournament play.

If a player only participates in sixty (60) percent of the Regular Season games in one division (Major or Junior) as of June 15, she is only eligible to participate with that particular division from that point forward in regular season and/or tournament play.

A player may only be selected to and participate on one (1) tournament team.

Any player who is league age 12 must be permitted to play in the Major Division. The local league cannot force any player who is league age 12 to play in the Junior League Division.

NOTE: If a player pitches in one or more regular season games on a Junior League team, he/she will be ineligible to pitch in the Major Division from that point forward in regular season and would only be eligible for the Junior League tournament team.

Softball Pitching Restrictions

(b) For a 12-year-old participating in the Major and Junior League Divisions as permitted under Regulation IV, the pitching rules and regulations regarding days of rest that are pertinent to the division in which the pitcher is used will apply to that game. Innings pitched previously in both divisions are taken into account when determining the eligibility of the pitcher for a particular game, with respect to days of rest and number of innings available.

The maximum number of innings allowed in a calendar week will be determined based on the division. In no event will any player who is a pitcher in the Major and Junior Division be permitted to pitch more than 30 innings in a calendar week. Only 18 of those innings may be pitched in the Major Division.

Example 1 – *A player pitches four innings in a Junior Division game on Sunday. On Monday, she has a scheduled game in the Major Division. She would not be eligible to pitch in that game because the Major Division regulations require her to have one calendar day of rest, as a result of pitching in more than one inning on the previous day.*

Example 2 – *A player pitches four innings in a Major Division game on Sunday. On Monday, she has a scheduled game in the Junior Division, and she would be eligible to pitch in that game because the Junior Division regulations permit pitching on the next calendar day if less than five innings were pitched on the previous day.*

Example 3 – *A player pitches in seven innings in a Junior Division game played on Sunday and seven more innings in another Junior Division game on Tuesday, for a total of 14 innings. On Thursday, she has a scheduled game in the Major Division. She then pitches nine innings in the Major Division game, for a total of 23 innings overall (14 innings in Juniors, nine innings in Majors). However, if another game is scheduled for Saturday -- either Major Division or Junior Division -- she would be limited to seven innings in that game (for a total of 30 for that calendar week.)*

Summary and Implementation: Beginning immediately, this allows 12-year-old softball players to play in the Major and/or Junior divisions of softball, if drafted at the same time. Requests for league-age 12-year-olds to participate as pool players (to be move up occasionally to the Junior Division) must be approved by the Charter Committee in Williamsport.

Rule 1.07 in the Softball Rule Book has been amended to read:

1.07 – The pitcher’s plate shall be a rectangular slab of whitened rubber 24 inches by 6 inches. It shall be set in the ground as shown in Diagrams 1 and 2, so that the distance between the front side of the pitcher’s plate and home base (the rear point of home plate) shall be – (1) Minor League: 35 feet; (2) Little League (Majors) and Junior League: 40 feet; (3) *Senior and Big League: 43 feet.*

Summary and Implementation: Beginning immediately, this increases the pitching distance in Senior League Softball and Big League Softball from 40 feet to 43 feet. (Note: This means all leagues must make this change immediately. Leagues where the change is not possible for the 2010 regular season must document the reasons the change is not possible and submit them as a Charter Committee Waiver Request for consideration. The 43-foot distance is mandatory during the International Tournament for all fields on which Senior League Softball and Big League Softball division Tournament games are scheduled, from district play through the World Series.)

Rule 2.00 in the Softball Rule Book has been amended to read, in part:

BUNT is a batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly. *Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered an attempted bunt. In order to take a pitch, the batter must withdraw the bat backwards away from the ball.* (Tee Ball: Bunts are not permitted. Batters are not permitted to take a half-swing. If the umpire feels the batter is taking a half-swing, the batter may be called back to swing again.)

Summary and Implementation: Beginning immediately for all softball divisions, this mandates that the umpire call a strike when the batter holds the bat in the strike zone when the pitch is delivered, even if the batter does not “offer” at the pitch. This also will apply during the International Tournament.

Rule 6.09 (b) in the Softball Rule Book has been amended to read:

The batter becomes a runner when –
(b) *Major/Junior/Senior/Big League:* the third strike called by the umpire is not caught, providing (1) first base is unoccupied or (2) first base is occupied with two out. NOTE: A batter forfeits the opportunity to advance to first base when he/she enters the dugout or any other dead ball area.

Summary and Implementation: Beginning immediately for the Major Softball Division, players may advance on a dropped third strike. Little League will permit local leagues to adopt a rule requiring players not to advance. This option applies only for the regular season. In Tournament play, the rule will be implemented as noted above.

Rule 7.08 (a) (5) in the Softball Rule Book has been amended to read, in part:

Any runner is out when –

(a) (5) Major/Junior/Senior/Big League Divisions: the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which that runner is entitled until the ball has been released by the pitcher on the delivery. (NOTE: A local league may adopt a rule that requires the runner to keep in contact with the base to which that runner is entitled until the ball has been batted or reaches the batter, or be called out.)

(b) Minor League/Tee Ball: the runner fails to keep in contact with the base to which that runner is entitled until the ball has been batted or reaches the batter.

Summary and Implementation: Beginning immediately for the Major Softball Division, runners may leave the base when the pitcher releases the ball. Little League will permit local leagues to adopt a rule requiring runners to remain on the base until the ball reaches the batter. This option applies only for the regular season. In Tournament play, the rule will be implemented as noted above.

Rule 8.03 (c) in the Softball Rule Book has been amended to read:

(c) If the pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, all pitches must be legally delivered to the batter.

Summary and Implementation: Beginning immediately for the Junior, Senior and Big League Softball Divisions, this removes the ability to “waive” a batter to first base for an intentional walk. All softball divisions now fall under this same rule. This also will apply during the International Tournament.

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