



Little League Baseball and Softball Online

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Little League International Announces Bat Rules Changes for 2012 Season



By Communications Division

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa.

November 2, 2011

In an effort to provide timely information on bat rules, Little League International today announced the bat specifications and standards for the 2012 season.

Here are the highlights, followed by the actual text of the 2012 baseball bat rules:

- **For the Little League Major Baseball Division and below:** The moratorium on composite-barreled baseball bats remains in effect. However, some composite-barreled baseball bats that have been proven in laboratory testing to meet the BPF (Bat Performance Factor) standard throughout the life of the bat, through the Accelerated Break-In (ABI) process, have received waivers. That list is here: [Licensed/Approved Composite 2 1/4 Bats](#).

Note that in the Little League Majors Baseball Division and below, there is no limit on the “drop” weight of any bat.

- **For Junior League Baseball:** The rule was updated to reflect the changes that were anticipated and published two years ago regarding bats with 2 5/8 inch barrels. As a result, composite-barreled baseball bats in this division, regardless of barrel size, must meet BBCOR (Batted Ball Co-Efficient of Restitution) standards, and must be so labeled. Note that all composite-barreled baseball bats that meet the BBCOR standard have a “drop” of no more than “minus-3.” However, in the Junior League Baseball division, bats that **do not have composite materials in the barrel (i.e., all metal, all alloy, all wood)**, and meet all other applicable standards, can have ANY drop weight. Bats with a barrel of less than 2 5/8 inches also can be used in the Junior League Baseball Division, but must still comply with all other specifications noted.
- **For Senior League Baseball and Big League Baseball:** The rule was updated to reflect the changes that were anticipated and published two years ago regarding bats with 2 5/8 inch barrels. As a result, all bats with non-wood barrels must meet BBCOR (Batted Ball Co-Efficient of Restitution) standards, and must be so labeled. Because all BBCOR bats have a “drop” of no more than “minus-3,” this means all non-wood bats in these divisions must have a drop of no more than minus-3.
- **Tamper-Evident Bats:** Because the technology to create bats that show evidence of tampering is not yet available, this aspect of the rules that was anticipated and published two years ago, and again last year, will not apply in 2012.
- **Penalty for Use of an Illegal Bat:** Previously, the penalty for the use of an illegal bat was simply to remove the bat from the game. In 2012, the penalty has been increased as noted in the rules below.

- **Definition of an Illegal Bat:** To narrow the definition of an illegal bat, a new entry was added to Rule 2.00, specifically describing an illegal bat for the purposes of imposing the penalty. As a result, the definition includes altered bats, but excludes a bat that: is no longer smooth because of normal use; is cracked or dented because of normal use; has a handle that has a smaller diameter than the measurement noted in the specifications; or, has material on the grip (or no material) that does not meet the specifications.
- **Softball:** All rules regarding bats in all softball divisions remain the same as in 2011. The moratorium on composite-barreled bats does not apply to softball.
- **Licensed Bats:** As it has for decades, Little League is publishing a list of licensed bats, all of which have a barrel diameter of 2 1/4 inches. This is not a list of all bats that can be used. As long as the bat meets all the specifications and standards for the specific division of play in question, it need not carry the Little League trademark. (Note that Little League does not license any bats with a diameter of 2 5/8 inches.) The list of licensed 2 1/4 bats can be downloaded as a PDF here: [All Licensed 2 1/4 Bats](#).

The rules regarding baseball bats for 2012 are:

Rule 1.10 - Baseball - The bat must be a baseball bat which meets Little League specifications and standards as noted in this rule. It shall be a smooth, rounded stick and made of wood or of material and color tested and proved acceptable to Little League standards.

Little League (Majors) and below: it shall not be more than thirty-three (33) inches in length nor more than two and one-quarter (2 1/4) inches in diameter. Non-wood bats shall be labeled with a BPF (bat performance factor) of 1.15 or less; **EXCEPTION: For the 2011-2012 Little League (Majors) and below, for regular season play and Tournament, composite bats are prohibited unless approved by Little League International.**

A list of approved and licensed composite bats can be found on the Little League website at www.littleleague.org.

Junior League: it shall not be more than 34 inches in length; nor more than 2 5/8 inches in diameter, and if wood, not less than fifteen-sixteenths (15/16) inches in diameter (7/8 inch for bats less than 30”) at its smallest part. All composite bats shall meet the Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) performance standard, and such bats shall be so labeled with a silkscreen or other permanent certification mark. The certification mark shall be rectangular, a minimum of a half-inch on each side and located on the barrel of the bat in any contrasting color.

Senior/Big League: it shall not be more than 36 inches in length, nor more than 2 5/8 inches in diameter, and if wood, not less than fifteen-sixteenths (15/16) inches in diameter (7/8 inch for bats less than 30”) at its smallest part. The bat shall not weigh, numerically, more than three ounces less than the length of the bat (e.g., a 33-inch-long bat cannot weigh less than 30 ounces). All bats not made of a single piece of wood shall meet the Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) performance standard, and such bats shall be so labeled with a silkscreen or other permanent certification mark. The certification mark shall be rectangular, a minimum of a half-inch on each side and located on the barrel of the bat in any contrasting color. Aluminum and composite bats shall be marked as to their material makeup being aluminum or composite. This marking shall be silkscreen or other permanent certification mark, a minimum of one-half-inch on each side and located on the barrel of the bat in any contrasting color.

In all divisions, wood bats may be taped or fitted with a sleeve for a distance not exceeding sixteen (16) inches (18 inches for Junior/Senior/Big League baseball) from the small end. A non-wood bat must have a grip of cork, tape or composition material, and must extend a minimum of 10 inches from the small end. Slippery tape or similar material is prohibited.

NOTE 1: Junior/Senior/Big League: The 2 3/4 inch in diameter bat is not allowed in any division.

NOTE 2: The traditional batting donut is not permissible

NOTE 3: The bat may carry the mark “Little League Tee Ball.”

NOTE 4: Non-wood bats may develop dents from time to time. Bats that cannot pass through the approved Little League bat ring for the appropriate division must be removed from play. The 2 1/4 inch bat ring must be used for bats in the Tee Ball, Minor League and Little League Baseball divisions. The 2 5/8 inch bat ring must be used for bats in the Junior, Senior and Big League divisions of baseball.

NOTE 5: An illegal bat must be removed. Any bat that has been altered shall be removed from play. Penalty – See Rule – 6.06 (d).

Rule 2.00 Definition of Illegal Bat

Illegal Bat – An Illegal bat is a bat that has been altered or a bat that is not approved for play because it does not meet specifications with regard to length, weight, barrel diameter, labeling or performance standard for the division in which it is used.

Rule 6.06 – Baseball - The batter is out for illegal action when –

(d) The batter enters the batter’s box with an illegal bat (see bat specifications Rule 1.10) or is discovered having used an illegal bat.

Note: If the infraction is discovered before the next pitch following the turn at bat of the player who used an illegal bat -

1. The manager of the defense may advise the plate umpire of a decision to decline the penalty and accept the play. Such election shall be made immediately at the end of the play.
2. For the first violation, the offensive team will lose one eligible adult base coach for the duration of the game.
3. For the second violation, the manager of the team will be ejected from the game. Any subsequent violation will result in the newly designated manager being ejected.