

## Bulletin: Significant Policy, Rule, and Regulation Changes for 2012

Little League International today announced the full list of significant changes that will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2012, to the policies, rules and regulations of the program.

In order to give timely information to parents and leagues, some of the changes were announced several weeks ago. One change, in the bat regulations, has been further updated since the first announcement. The update clarifies the penalty for using an illegal bat.

A list of all the significant changes, along with a summary and explanation of the changes, is below:

### POLICY

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**Residence Eligibility Requirements** for all divisions of play has been amended to read, in part:

Residence shall be established and supported by documents, dated *or in force between February 1, 2011 (previous year) and February 1, 2012 (current year)*, from THREE OR MORE of the following categories to determine residency of such parent(s) or guardian:

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 season, this requires players' parents or guardians to provide residency documentation dated or in force between February 1, 2011 (previous year) and February 1, 2012 (current year). This means, for instance, that a Driver's License that was issued a number of years earlier, but was in force between the dates noted, is acceptable. However, a utility bill that is dated outside of the dates noted, is not acceptable.

### REGULATIONS

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**Regulation I(c)(9)** for all divisions of play has been amended to read, in part:

*Note 1: The United States Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Registry is free and available at [www.nsopr.gov](http://www.nsopr.gov).*

*Note 2: Little League International currently provides each league with access to 125 free criminal background checks per year. Due to the refusal of the states of Hawaii, Iowa, Michigan & Virginia to provide sex offender registry data to the records check provider, the free criminal background checks no longer meet the minimum Little League requirement of a nationwide search of the sex offender registry. Sex offender registry data for the four states listed above are currently only available through the Department of Justice National Sex Offender Registry ([www.nsopr.gov](http://www.nsopr.gov)) and/or through the individual state's sex offender registry website.*

*In addition to meeting the minimum requirement of checking the United States Department of Justice National Sex Offender Registry, ([www.nsopr.gov](http://www.nsopr.gov)), Little League strongly encourages all leagues to also utilize the national criminal records search available through the Little League website. This additional criminal records check may provide additional important information regarding the criminal records of individuals whose crimes do not require that they be listed on a sex offender registry. For example,*

*convictions for assault, battery, theft or drug offenses would not result in a report to sex offender registry.*

*Information on how to utilize this benefit, as well as how to conduct back ground checks, can be found on the Little League website at [www.littleleague.org/learn/programs/childprotection.htm](http://www.littleleague.org/learn/programs/childprotection.htm)*

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 season, this modifies Note 1 and 2 in Regulation I(c)(9) to highlight changes in the laws/procedures of four states with regard to sex offender registries, and the free criminal background checks Little League strongly recommends.

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**Regulation I(a) – THE LEAGUE in the Baseball Rule Book** has been amended in part, to read:

Senior League is an extension of the local Little League to accommodate youngsters league ages 13, 14, 15 and 16; Big League is an extension of the local Little League to accommodate youngsters league ages 15, 16, 17 and 18.

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 season, this expands the Senior Baseball Division to include 13-year-olds, and expands the Big League Baseball Division to include 15-year-olds.

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**Regulation II(g) in the Challenger Division Rule Book** has been amended to read:

*A player may participate in the Challenger Division only in a league's boundaries in which he/she does not reside provided (1) the league he/ she wishes to participate in accepts the player; (2) the league, if any, where the player resides provides a written release of the player and (3) the district administrator provides written approval for the player to participate. Copies of the releases must be maintained by the league in which the player is participating.*

**NOTE:** *If the player does not reside in any league's boundaries, only the written approval of the district administrator is required.*

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 season, this allows Challenger Division players residing outside a league's boundaries to participate in the league if the specific noted requirements are met.

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**Regulation IV(i) in the Baseball and Softball Rule Books, applying only to the Senior League Division and below,** has been amended to read:

Every rostered player present at the start of a game will participate in each game for a minimum of six (6) defensive outs and bat at least one (1) time. *For the purposes of this rule, "six (6) defensive outs" is defined as: A player enters the field in one of the nine defensive positions when his/her team is on defense and occupies such position while six outs are made; "bat at least one (1) time" is defined as: A player enters the batter's box with no count and completes that time at bat by being put out, called out by an umpire or by reaching base safely.*

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 season, this modification defines the requirements of mandatory play.

## PLAYING RULES

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**Rule 1.10 in the Baseball and Challenger Division Rule Books has been amended to read:**

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 ( $2\frac{1}{4}$ ) 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](http://www.littleleague.org).*

**Junior League:** it shall not be more than 34 inches in length; nor more than  $2\frac{5}{8}$  inches in diameter, and if wood, not less than fifteen-sixteenths ( $\frac{15}{16}$ ) inches in diameter ( $\frac{7}{8}$  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  $2\frac{5}{8}$  inches in diameter, and if wood, not less than fifteen-sixteenths ( $\frac{15}{16}$ ) inches in diameter ( $\frac{7}{8}$  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  $2\frac{3}{4}$  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 2¼ 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).*

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 season, language was added prohibiting the use of composite bats for the Major division unless approved and licensed by Little League International and modified the Junior, Senior and Big League bats regulation noting the new BBCOR bat standard.

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**Rule 1.11(j)** in all rule books has been amended to read:

*Players must not wear jewelry such as, but not limited to, rings, watches, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, nor any hard cosmetic/decorative items. This rule applies regardless of the composition of such jewelry, hard cosmetic item or hard decorative item.*

**(EXCEPTION:** Jewelry that alerts medical personnel to a specific condition is permissible.)

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 season, the added language prohibits players from wearing any jewelry, regardless of composition.

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**Rule 2.00** in all rule books has been amended to read, in part:

*An **AT-BAT**, for the purposes of meeting the requirements of Mandatory Play (if applicable), is when a batter assumes the position of a batter with no count and is put out, called out by an umpire or reaches base. An at-bat for scorekeeping/ statistical purposes is defined in the publication, “What’s the Score?”*

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 season, this defines an at-bat for the purpose of mandatory play.

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

*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.*

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 season, this defines an illegal bat for the purpose of rule 6.06(d). As a result, a bat that is, for instance, cracked or damaged because of normal use, would not be considered “illegal” and could not result in the batter being called out for using it, but it still must be removed from play.

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**Rule 6.05(b)** in the Baseball Rule Book has been amended to read:

**6.05** - A batter is out when -

(b) **Little League (Majors)/Junior/Senior/Big League** –

- (1) a third strike is legally caught by the catcher;
- (2) a third strike is not caught by the catcher when first base is occupied before two are out. **Minor League and Tee Ball:** A third strike is caught or not caught by the catcher. *Option: A local league may elect to apply the Minor League and Tee Ball rule for the Little League (Major Division) for the regular season.*

**Summary and Implementation:** During the 2012 season, for the Major Baseball Division, players may advance on a third strike that is not caught in flight by the catcher. However, local leagues may opt to use the Minor League and Tee Ball rule noted above, for the Major Baseball Division, instead. This option applies only for the regular season. In Tournament play, the rule will be implemented as noted above for the Majors Division. The rule for tournament play in 10-11 is noted below.

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**Rule 6.06(d) in the Baseball Rule Book** has been amended to read:

A batter is out for illegal action when -

*(d) The batter enters the batter's box with one or both feet entirely on the ground with an illegal bat (see bat specifications rule 1.10) or is discovered having used an illegal bat prior to the next player entering the batter's box.*

***Note:** If the infraction is discovered before the next player enters the batter's box 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.*

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 season, this imposes penalties for the use of an illegal bat in a game.

## **TOURNAMENT RULES AND GUIDELINES**

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**Responsibility and Chain of Command in the Baseball and Softball Rule Book** has been amended to read, in part:

**The Tournament Committee also reserves the right in its sole discretion to impose any of the above penalties if, in its judgment, any player, manager or coach displays unsportsmanlike conduct or repeatedly/willfully violates any rules, regulations or policies contained herein during the game, at the game site, or at any event related to the International Tournament. The decision of the Tournament Committee is final and binding. The committee also reserves the right to impose any penalty the committee deems appropriate if the committee determines action is necessary to**

**correct a situation brought to its attention, regardless of the source of that information. The decision of the Tournament Committee is final and binding.**

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 International Tournament, this allows the Tournament Committee to impose penalties if a player, manager or coach repeatedly/willfully violates any Little League rules, regulations or policies.

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**Release of Names in the Softball Rule Book** has been amended to read, in part:

**9-10 Year Old Division/10-11 Year Old Division/Little League:** The release of names of players selected for the tournament team shall not be made before June 15, or two weeks prior to the start of the tournament (whichever is earlier), and not until the availability and eligibility of all prospective team members have been established. (Little League accident insurance for tournament teams will not go into effect until June 15, or the date of the release of the names of Tournament Team members, whichever is earlier).

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 International Tournament, this permits the Little League (Majors) Softball division to release names on June 15, or two weeks prior to the start of the tournament, whichever is earlier.

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**Tournament Team Practice in the Softball Rule Book** has been amended to read, in part:

**9-10 Year Old Division/10-11 Year Old Division/Little League:** Try-outs or practices by tournament teams shall not be held before June 15 or two weeks prior to the start of the tournament. Tournament team practice may only take place against other teams within the same or contiguous districts in the same division, providing such practice is done out of uniform. (Little League accident insurance for tournament teams will not go into effect until June 15, or the date of the release of the names of tournament Team members, whichever is earlier).

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 International Tournament, this permits the Little League (Majors) Softball division to conduct try-outs and begin practice on June 15, or two weeks prior to the start of the tournament, whichever is earlier.

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**Curfew in the Baseball Rule Book** has been amended to read, in part:

No inning shall start after midnight prevailing time (12:30 a.m. prevailing time for **Junior League**; 1:00 a.m. prevailing time for **Senior/Big League**). **NOTE:** An inning starts the moment the third out is made completing the previous inning. **NOTE:** *Neither Tournament Directors and officials nor tournament teams are permitted to circumvent the curfews established above by continuing, suspending and restarting or starting a game after curfew has been reached and play is required to be terminated.*

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 International Tournament, this prohibits suspended games to be continued after curfew.

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**Tournament Rule 3 in the Baseball Rule Book** has been amended to read, in part:

**NOTE:** *In the 10-11 Tournament Division, the batter may advance on a dropped third strike (6.09(b)).* These rules will not apply for the 9-10 Tournament Division.

**Summary and Implementation:** For the 2012 International Tournament, the 10-11 Year Old Tournament Division players may advance on a dropped third strike.