

**GAME
MODIFICATIONS
AND ALTERNATE
METHODS OF PLAY**



“To attract younger players in the digital age, we need to provide more action and fewer lulls during baseball/softball game play.”

- Rob Manfred, Commissioner of Major League Baseball

BACKSTORY

- In 2017, Little League International sought input from Major League Baseball and USA Baseball to help develop ways to promote participation in youth baseball/softball.
- Various alternate methods of play and game modifications have been tested in local Little Leagues across the U.S. since 2017
- Feedback was received from players, coaches, umpires, and parents
- In 2019, the Little League International Board of Directors approved efforts to move forward with alternate methods of play for 2020 as part of an overall strategic plan to promote a Player First approach to promote participation in Little League programs.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT

For each game modification and alternate methods of play, the following five areas were considered:

- **Player Engagement:** Create opportunities, especially at the younger divisions of play, to increase the amount of time players spend on the field, having fun, and being engaged in a game setting.
- **Pace of Play:** Find ways to make the time on the field meaningful, educational, fun, and interactive for the players and their families in the stands.
- **Time of Game:** Explore options that will keep Little League games progressing to accommodate busy family schedules and limited field availability.
- **Pitch Count:** Help protect young arms from overuse injuries in the Little League Baseball program.
- **Parent Expectations:** Educate families and fans on how these new methods will be used and why it's important to learn about changes to the game that may benefit your league and players.

LITTLE LEAGUE SANDLOT FUN DAYS

- Provides local leagues an option that provides an opportunity for children to play in an unstructured, relaxed atmosphere, where the players make the rules.
- Open to both existing and new players
- Designed for games to be played in a loosely structured environment
- Limited adult involvement that encourages a welcoming, fun environment within the community

INTRODUCTION TO LITTLE LEAGUE SANDLOT FUN DAYS

- Players must meet age requirements for each division of play
- One approved adult volunteer must be present to oversee the event
- Players will determine selection of teams as well as how many defensive players are used; continuous batting order recommended
- Umpires are not required

LITTLE LEAGUE SANDLOT FUN DAYS – NEXT STEPS

- Encourage leagues to adopt new programming to enhance their player members, volunteers, and community experience
- Provide training within your District for League Presidents and other league officials
- Assist leagues in developing Little League Sandlot Fun Days events
- Track local league participation and gather best practices
- Spread best practices through monthly District meetings

DISTRICT TRAVEL PROGRAM

- Provides for a District-operated travel program to supplement regular season participation
- Operated by the District Administrator and staff
- Designed to allow for more competitive play during the regular season
- Players must be registered and participating in a local league in order to be eligible
- Games must be played against other teams from this division. Teams will not be permitted to participate against non-Little League teams or in non-Little League events

DISTRICT TRAVEL PROGRAM

Little League® Data Center Maryland District 21,LL (4014955) | logged in as bunn@stateleague.net

Home | Charter Application | Team Counts and Charter Fees

Team Counts and Charter Fees

Please enter the number of teams you wish to charter for this season.
Not sure which divisions to charter? Click on the ⓘ next to each division for more information.

Charter Application Progress

- Overview
- Terms and Conditions
- Verify League Information
- Team Counts**
- Insurance
- Summary
- Confirmation and Payment

Little League Baseball®

Level of Play	2019 Season Teams	2020 Season Teams	Fee Per Team	Charter Fee
Major - Travel ⓘ Ages 9-12	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Intermediate (50/70) - Travel ⓘ Ages 11-13	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Junior - Travel ⓘ Ages 12-14	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Senior - Travel ⓘ Ages 13-16	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Total Little League Baseball® Charter Fees:				\$0.00 USD

Little League Challenger Division®

Level of Play	2019 Season Teams	2020 Season Teams	Fee Per Team	Charter Fee
Challenger ⓘ Ages 4-16	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Senior Challenger ⓘ Ages 15+	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Total Little League Challenger Division® Charter Fees:				\$0.00 USD


Little League Softball® - Girls

Level of Play	2019 Season Teams	2020 Season Teams	Fee Per Team	Charter Fee
Major - Travel ⓘ Ages 9-12	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Junior - Travel ⓘ Ages 12-14	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Senior ⓘ Ages 13-16	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Total Little League Softball® - Girls Charter Fees:				\$0.00 USD

Little League Softball® - Boys

Level of Play	2019 Season Teams	2020 Season Teams	Fee Per Team	Charter Fee
Major - Travel ⓘ Ages 9-12	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Junior - Travel ⓘ Ages 12-14	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Senior ⓘ Ages 13-16	0	0	\$10.00 USD	\$0.00 USD
Total Little League Softball® - Boys Charter Fees:				\$0.00 USD

Cancel Charter Application

OFFICIAL SPORTING GOODS RETAIL PARTNER OF LITTLE LEAGUE® **DICK'S** SPORTS & OUTDOORS 

- D.A. is responsible for chartering and insuring teams on the Little League Data Center.
- District Staff is responsible for conducting background checks on all volunteers and approving team managers/coaches.
- D.A. must complete an ASAP plan for the District Travel League.

DISTRICT TRAVEL PROGRAM

- Each league within the District is permitted to enter a team or teams into the travel program
- All Regular Season Rules and Regulations will apply
- Individual player pitch counts carry over from regular season play to the district travel program
- No interleague or special games forms are required
- It is recommended that the travel program schedules one game a week during the regular season

GAME MODIFICATION – COUNT ON BATTER

- **What:** Each batter will enter the batter's box with a one ball and one strike (1-1) count
- **Why:**
 - Shown to reduce average game time by approximately 30 minutes
 - Encourages batters to swing at more pitches and be actively involved
 - Has resulted in more balls in play and more action on the field
 - Fewer pitching changes due to lower pitch counts and reduced pitching stress
 - Recommend for younger divisions of play

GAME MODIFICATION – RUNNERS ON BASE

- **What:** Each inning will begin with a runner on base
 - Players not currently in the line-up (or the last two batters in the line-up if using continuous batting order) will be placed on first and second base at the start of the inning and the game will proceed as normal.
- **Why:**
 - Significantly increases player engagement
 - Limits the amount of downtime for players between at-bats
 - Does not increase pitch counts
 - Increased game action is attractive to families and parents who do not consider themselves a baseball/softball fan
 - Recommended for younger divisions of play

GETTING STARTED

- Both game modification options and the Little League Sandlot Fun Days program are approved for local leagues to implement for the 2020 season
 - **NOTE:** Games played using the game modifications will count towards a local league's regular season and tournament eligibility
- It is important to work with your local league Board of Directors, parents, and volunteers to understand these options and ensure the league is in agreement before implementing
- Local leagues are encouraged to share player, coach, parent, and umpire feedback with Little League International
- Little League International will be continuing to develop resources for local leagues and districts to use to educate and inform their families on these new methods. Continue to check **LittleLeagueUniversity.org** for more information.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Little League International is continuing to explore additional opportunities, especially in the softball division
- Local leagues are encouraged to identify additional ways to get their members active and engaged in the program and share those with Little League International
- Any questions or suggestions should be sent to support@littleleague.org.