



## ***SCHEDULE OF EVENTS***

*Subject to Change*

### ***THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5***

- Registration (Grand Foyer; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor):
  - 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
- Exhibit Hall (Griffin Hall; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
- Congress Store (Griffin Hall; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
- Pin Trading (Room 201-202; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.

### ***FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6***

- Registration (Grand Foyer; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor):
  - 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Exhibit Hall (Griffin Hall; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
  - 9 p.m. – 11 p.m.
- Congress Store (Griffin Hall; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
  - 9 p.m. – 11 p.m.
- Pin Trading (Room 201-202; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
  - 9 p.m. – 11 p.m.
- Culture Shaping for Leaders, Presented by the Positive Coaching Alliance (Grand Ballroom 9-10; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
  - 4 p.m. – 5 p.m.

- Opening Ceremonies (Grand Ballroom 5 & 6; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)  
*Hosted by Jenny Dalton-Hill, featuring opening remarks from Steven P. Johnson, Little League International Board of Directors Chairman; a Girls With Game Conversation with Kim Ng, Athletes Unlimited Softball League Commissioner, and Liz DiLullo Brown, Little League Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing and Business Relationship Officer; and a panel discussion featuring current Little Leaguers, including 2025 Little League Softball World Series Championship pitcher, Reagan Bills, and players from the Indianapolis-area.*
  - 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- Hospitality Mixer Presented by A.D. STARR (Exhibit Hall/Griffin Hall; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 9 p.m. – 11 p.m.

## **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7**

- Registration (Grand Foyer; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor):
  - 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Exhibit Hall (Griffin Hall; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Congress Store (Griffin Hall; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Pin Trading (Room 201-202; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Volunteer Excellence Breakfast (Grand Ballroom 5 & 6; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor) – *All Staff Should Attend:*  
*Join us as we celebrate all our volunteers, present recognitions to D.A.s and A.D.A.s from around the world, and a keynote conversation between Patrick Wilson, Little League President and CEO, and the nine Field Directors to the Little League International Board of Directors.*
  - 8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
- Educational Sessions  
*Attendees may select the sessions they wish to attend and scan a QR code to check-in to the session and verify their attendance. Five randomly selected individuals who attend all Strategic Roundtable Discussions and Educational Sessions will receive a \$100 gift card.*
  - 10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. – Educational Session 1 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
    - Elevating the Tournament Experience: Best Practices for District Administrators (Grand Ballrooms 1-2)
    - Central Registration 2027: The Transition from Sports Connect to PlayMetrics (Grand Ballrooms 3-4)
    - League Voices: Insights and Actions from League and Community Visits Around the World (Grand Ballrooms 7-8)
    - Transitioning to SAFE: The Evolution of Safety Initiatives in Little League (Grand Ballrooms 9-10; 3)
  - 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. – Educational Session 2 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
    - Elevating the Tournament Experience: Best Practices for District Administrators (Grand Ballrooms 1-2)
    - Central Registration 2027: The Transition from Sports Connect to PlayMetrics (Grand Ballrooms 3-4)
    - League Voices: Insights and Actions from League and Community Visits Around the World (Grand Ballrooms 7-8)
    - Transitioning to SAFE: The Evolution of Safety Initiatives in Little League (Grand Ballrooms 9-10)

- *Full descriptions of the Educational Sessions can be found at the end of this Schedule of Events.*
- Leading Umpires at the Local Levels: “Turning the Fire Hose into a Steady Stream” (Rooms 203-205; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)
  - 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
  - *Full description can be found at the end of this Schedule of Events. This session is intended for District Umpire Staff, limited space is available.*
- LUNCH BREAK – EXHIBIT HALL AND CONGRESS STORE OPEN:
  - 12:15 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.
- Little League Strategic Plan: Racing Toward the Future (Grand Ballroom 5 & 6; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor):
  - 1:45 – 4:15 p.m.
- Strategic Roundtable Session:
 

*Attendees must participate in the session outlined below based on their group assignment found on their Congress Badge. A QR code will be at each session to check-in to the session and verify their attendance. Five randomly selected individuals who attend all Strategic Roundtable Discussions and Educational Sessions will receive a \$100 gift card.*

  - 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. – Session 1 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
    - Recruiting New Little Leaguers and Keeping them in the Program (Grand Ballrooms 1-2; Group: **Austin Dillon**)
    - Strengthening Softball (Grand Ballrooms 3-4; Group: **Kyle Petty**)
    - Keeping Players in the Little League Ecosystem (Grand Ballrooms 7-8; Group: **Tony Stewart**)
    - Enhancing Tee Ball and Player Development (Grand Ballrooms 9-10; Group: **Janet Guthrie**)
  - *Full descriptions of Strategic Roundtable Sessions can be found at the end of this Schedule of Events.*

## **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8**

- Registration (Grand Foyer; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor):
  - 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Congress Store (Griffin Hall; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Pin Trading (Room 201-202; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Strategic Roundtable Sessions:
 

*Attendees must participate in the session outlined below based on their group assignment found on their Congress Badge. A QR code will be at each session to check-in to the session and verify their attendance. Five randomly selected individuals who attend all Strategic Roundtable Discussions and Educational Sessions will receive a \$100 gift card.*

  - 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. – Session 2 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
    - Recruiting New Little Leaguers and Keeping them in the Program (Grand Ballrooms 1-2; Group: **Kyle Petty**)
    - Strengthening Softball (Grand Ballrooms 3-4; Group: **Tony Stewart**)
    - Keeping Players in the Little League Ecosystem (Grand Ballrooms 7-8; Group: **Janet Guthrie**)

- Enhancing Tee Ball and Player Development (Grand Ballrooms 9-10; Group: **Austin Dillon**)
- 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. – Session 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
  - Recruiting New Little Leaguers and Keeping them in the Program (Grand Ballrooms 1-2; Group: **Tony Stewart**)
  - Strengthening Softball (Grand Ballrooms 3-4; Group: **Janet Guthrie**)
  - Keeping Players in the Little League Ecosystem (Grand Ballrooms 7-8; Group: **Austin Dillon**)
  - Enhancing Tee Ball and Player Development (Grand Ballrooms 9-10; Group: **Kyle Petty**)
- 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. – Session 4 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
  - Recruiting New Little Leaguers and Keeping them in the Program (Grand Ballrooms 1-2; Group: **Janet Guthrie**)
  - Strengthening Softball (Grand Ballrooms 3-4; Group: **Austin Dillon**)
  - Keeping Players in the Little League Ecosystem (Grand Ballrooms 7-8; Group: **Kyle Petty**)
  - Enhancing Tee Ball and Player Development (Grand Ballrooms 9-10; Group: **Tony Stewart**)
- *Full descriptions of Strategic Roundtable Sessions can be found at the end of this Schedule of Events.*
- LUNCH BREAK – CONGRESS STORE OPEN:
  - 12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
- Region Meetings:
  - 1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m.
    - Asia-Pacific Region (Room 203; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)
    - Canada Region (Room 204; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)
    - Central Region (Grand Ballrooms 1-2; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
    - East Region (Grand Ballrooms 3-4; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
    - Europe & Africa Region (Room 205; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)
    - Latin America Region (Room 304-306; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
    - Southeast Region (Grand Ballrooms 7-8; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
    - Southwest Region (Grand Ballrooms 9-10; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
    - West Region (Grand Ballrooms 5-6; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)

## **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9**

- Registration (Grand Foyer; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor):
  - 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Pin Trading (Room 201-202; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor):
  - 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- Educational Sessions:
 

*Attendees may select the sessions they wish to attend and scan a QR code to check-in to the session and verify their attendance. Five randomly selected individuals who attend all Strategic Roundtable Discussions and Educational Sessions will receive a \$100 gift card.*

  - 9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. – Educational Session 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
    - Elevating the Tournament Experience: Best Practices for District Administrators (Grand Ballrooms 1-2)
    - Central Registration 2027: The Transition from Sports Connect to PlayMetrics (Grand Ballrooms 3-4)

- League Voices: Insights and Actions from League and Community Visits Around the World (Grand Ballrooms 7-8)
- Transitioning to SAFE: The Evolution of Safety Initiatives in Little League (Grand Ballrooms 9-10)
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. – Educational Session 4 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)
  - Elevating the Tournament Experience: Best Practices for District Administrators (Grand Ballrooms 1-2)
  - Central Registration 2027: The Transition from Sports Connect to PlayMetrics (Grand Ballrooms 3-4)
  - League Voices: Insights and Actions from League and Community Visits Around the World (Grand Ballrooms 7-8)
  - Transitioning to SAFE: The Evolution of Safety Initiatives in Little League (Grand Ballrooms 9-10)
- *Full descriptions of the Educational Sessions can be found at the end of this Schedule of Events.*
- Closing Ceremonies Luncheon & Keynote Session featuring [Steve Shenbaum from Game On Nation](#) (Grand Ballroom 5 & 6; 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor):
  - 12:30 p.m. – Lunch
  - 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

## **STRATEGIC ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS DESCRIPTIONS:**

As will be provided in more detail during the **Little League Strategic Plan: Racing Toward the Future session on Saturday from 1:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**; as we develop our next strategic plan, hearing directly from our volunteers is crucial to our success, growth, and development as an organization. These sessions will be led by Little League International leadership team and staff who have formed workgroups around key areas of focus.

Each session will begin with a brief overview followed by a number of important discussion topics that attendees will work through at their assigned tables.

## **CONGRESS EDUCATIONAL SESSION DESCRIPTIONS:**

**Elevating the Tournament Experience: Best Practices for District Administrators (Lead Presenter: Aaron Weber, Little League East Region Director)**

Tournament play represents the pinnacle of the Little League season - it's where memories are made, communities come together, and we showcase the very best of what Little League offers. The D.A.s and their staffs' role in creating these experiences is critical to our mission. This session will focus on:

- Identifying key elements that create exceptional tournament experiences for players, families, and volunteers;
- Applying operational best practices to enhance tournament efficiency and quality
- Developing strategies to elevate their district tournament to showcase Little League at its best

**Central Registration 2027: The Transition from Sports Connect to PlayMetrics (Lead Presenters: Patrick Wilson, Little League President & CEO, and PlayMetrics Staff)**

Earlier this year, Stack Sports, the parent company of Sports Connect, merged with PlayMetrics. As a result of the merger, an evaluation of both the Sports Connect and Playmetrics platforms was conducted and after review and collaboration, the

decision was made to facilitate Little League Central Registration through the PlayMetrics platform beginning with the 2027 season. We believe this decision will bring great value and make a better registration experience to all of our leagues. This session will focus on:

- Understanding the timeline and process for migrating from Sports Connect to Playmetrics
- Identifying the key features and benefits of the Playmetrics platform
- Understanding action items for leagues/districts to take over the upcoming year to ensure a smooth transition to Playmetrics

**League Voices: Insights and Actions from League and Community Visits Around the World** (Lead Presenter, Corey M. Wright, Little League Senior Director of Regional Operations, and Region Directors)

Born in Williamsport and alive all over the world, Little League is where communities come together. This panel discussion will bring insight and learnings from our Region Staff's engagement with local league visits from the United States and around the world. This session will focus on:

- Identifying the top challenges facing leagues across all regions around the world
- Understanding specific trends and common themes affecting operations
- Applying actionable strategies to support leagues in addressing their most critical needs
- Aligning on district-level action plans developed with Little League's initiatives

**Transitioning to SAFE: The Evolution of Safety Initiatives in Little League** (Lead Presenters: Joy McCoy, Little League Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer, and Christina Taddeo, Little League Paralegal)

The safety and wellbeing of all Little League players and volunteers is paramount. SAFE represents an important update to how Little League supports safety, child protection, and preparedness across leagues and districts. This session will focus on:

- Understanding the reasons for transitioning from ASAP to SAFE and the purpose behind the new program structure.
- Navigating new tools, trainings, and annual requirements within the SAFE program.
- Understanding SAFE to Play compliance and recognition opportunities for leagues and districts
- Addressing common questions and challenges districts may encounter while supporting leagues through the transition

**Leading Umpires at the Local Levels: "Turning the Fire Hose into a Steady Stream"** (Lead Presenters: Stu Hartenstein, Little League Director of Umpire Development and Education, and Gerry Davis, Little League Senior Umpire Consultant) The phrase "drinking from a fire hose" is frequently used to describe the overwhelming experience of trying to learn or deliver all the necessary information at once. This can lead to frustration, uncertainty, or a lack of desire to give things a try for many prospective umpires and umpire leaders alike. This session highlight program updates, building a Junior Umpire Program, and will focus on:

- Simplifying and strengthening the training process by focusing on the foundational skills and core competencies essential for success.
- Identifying what matters most, and how to effectively develop these fundamentals, local umpire leaders will gain practical strategies to provide clear, targeted instruction.
- Reducing the sense of being overwhelmed and equips umpire leaders to better support, encourage, and develop confident umpires at the grassroots level.

## **BEHIND THE GROUP NAMES:**

As we gather to celebrate the past four Little League seasons and prepare for the years ahead through education sessions and meaningful conversation, we are excited to announce the four group names for the 2026 Little League® International Congress. In a city known for its auto-racing excellence, the group names will celebrate four auto-racing legends as we drive toward the future together.

**Austin Dillon**

A Southwest Forsyth County (N.C.) Little League graduate, Auston Dillon first made a name for himself in the summer of 2002, when he represented the Southeast Region with his teammates in the Little League Baseball World Series. Years later, nicknamed "The Ace," Dillon took his skills to the racetrack, breaking into the NASCAR circuit. His impressive racing resume grew, winning the Daytona 500 in 2018 and most recently winning the NASCAR Cup Series in 2025. Inducted into the Little League Hall of Excellence in 2019 for his dedication to the Little League values, Dillon's career is etched in program history.

**Kyle Petty**

An eight-time winner on the NASCAR circuit, Kyle Petty collected his first NASCAR Cup Series win in 1986 and retired after a 30-year career with 173 top ten finishes. Before his impressive racing career, Petty graduated from Southern Little League in Randleman, North Carolina. In his retirement, Petty hosted the Kity Petty Charity Ride Across America, a 3,800-mile motorcycle trip with the proceeds benefiting Victory Junction, a camp for children with chronic medical conditions or serious illnesses. Now a NASCAR television analyst and commentator, Petty was inducted into the Little League Hall of Excellence in 2010 for his sportsmanship and compassion.

**Tony Stewart**

An Indiana legend, Tony Stewart earned the nickname "Smoke" during his early dirt racing days because of his aggressive driving style that caused tires to haze and smoke. Later moving up to IndyCar and NASCAR races, throughout his career Stewart clinched the 1995 USAC Triple Crown, the 1997 IndyCar Series title, three NASCAR championships (2002, 2005, and 2011), and 49 NASCAR Cup Series wins. Today, he competes in the NHRA Top Fuel class for Tony Stewart Racing, with his most recent win in 2025.

**Janet Guthrie**

A Girl with Game in the racing world, Janet Guthrie became the first female to qualify and race in both the Indy 500 and the Daytona 500, where she placed 12th, in 1977. A University of Michigan graduate, Guthrie's career started as an aerospace engineer before shifting to full-time racing in 1972. Carrying her engineering skills into her racing career, Guthrie built her own engines and crewed her cars, making her a true pioneer in auto-racing. Today, Guthrie's helmet and firesuit from her 1978 Indy 500 appearance can be found at the Smithsonian Institute, inspiring generations of females.