

2026 LITTLE LEAGUE® RULEBOOK SIGNIFICANT UPDATES

REGULATIONS

Regulation IV(i) – Note 5 – Mandatory Play: Clarifies that during tournament play and anytime the continuous batting order is used, a courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher and/or catcher of record before that pitcher and/or catcher of record completes the requirements of mandatory play.

In addition to the above clarification, the following regulations also have minor edits and clarifications as noted in Little League's *Official Regulations, Playing Rules, and Operating Policies*:

- Regulation I – The League (c)(5)
- Regulation V – Selection of Players (b)
- Regulation IX – Special Games (4)
- Regulation XIII – Commercialization (b)

RULES

Baseball and Softball – Rule 1.10 – Note 2 – Use of Pine Tar: Permits the use of pine tar or any other similar adhesive substance at all levels of Little League Baseball and Softball.

Baseball and Softball – Rule 1.10 – A.R. 2 – Products to Assist the Batter: Updates wording to permit the use of thumb protectors and clarifies that products such as, but not limited to, choke-knobs and choke-up assists are not permitted.

Baseball – Rule 1.11(a)(3) – Sleeves Worn by the Pitcher: Removed the “neoprene” sleeve distinction in the rule to now include all sleeves.

Baseball and Softball – Rule 3.04, 7.14(b), T-3(d) – Courtesy Runner: Clarifies the placement of runners when a team courtesy runs for the pitcher and/or catcher of record with 2 outs at the same time.

Baseball and Softball – Rule 3.17 – Malfunctioning One-Way Communication Device: Clarifies that a reasonable amount of time must be provided to a team to correct a malfunctioning one-way communication device.

Baseball and Softball – Rule 4.04 – Note 2 – When a Player is Injured, Becomes Ill, or Must Leave the Game Site: Provides guidance for situations when a player is unable to complete a plate appearance or run after reaching base safely due to injury, illness, or ejection while using the continuous batting order during the regular season.

Baseball and Softball – Rule 4.18 – Forfeited Games: Removed the requirement for the scorebook to be signed by the Umpire-in-Chief for forfeited games.

Baseball and Softball – Rule 6.06(d) – Illegal Bats: Reworded to provide consistency with Tournament Rule 3(b).

Baseball and Softball – Rule 7.15(g) – Procedures for Use of a Double First Base: Clarifies that on an uncaught third strike, the fielder and the runner can use either part of the base.

Baseball – Rule 8.06(b) Note – Visits to the Pitcher and Returning as Pitcher (INT/JL/SL): Clarifies that in the Intermediate (50/70), Junior League, and Senior League Divisions, the number of visits remaining does not prevent a pitcher once removed from the mound as pitcher from returning as pitcher.

Softball – Rule 8.06(b) Note – Visits to the Pitcher and Returning as Pitcher: Clarifies that the number of visits remaining does not prevent a pitcher once removed from the pitcher's plate as pitcher from returning as pitcher.

TOURNAMENT

Baseball and Softball – Tournament Rule 3(b) – Illegal Bats: Reworded to provide consistency with Rule 6.06(d).

In addition to the above clarification, the following Tournament Rules also have minor edits and clarifications as noted in Little League's *Official Regulations, Playing Rules, and Operating Policies*:

- Tournament Organization – Tournament Eligibility Affidavit
- Tournament Organization – Player Eligibility
- Guidelines for Conduct of Tournament: Expenses