

Little League Baseball® World Series – 2018 Notable Rule Changes

Below is a list of some of the notable changes that were approved in 2018 by the Little League International Board of Directors with a short overview and summary explaining each. The full list of 2018 approved rule changes, including details about each, can be found at LittleLeague.org/Rules.

Tournament Rule 3(e) – Stealing/Relaying Pitch Selection

Overview: *Clarifies that any parties caught stealing and relaying pitch selection will be ejected.*

Summary: Each umpire has authority to disqualify any player, coach, manager, or substitute for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language and to eject such disqualified person from the playing field. If an umpire disqualifies a player while a play is in progress, the disqualification shall not take effect until no further action is possible in that play. The stealing and relaying of signs to alert the batter of pitch selection and/or location is unsportsmanlike behavior. If, in the judgment of the umpire this behavior is occurring, those responsible including any player(s), coach(es), and/or manager shall be ejected from the game.

Tournament Rule 4 – The Pitcher

Overview: *This restricts a player from pitching in three consecutive days in Regular Season and Tournament.*

Summary: Under no circumstances shall a player pitch in three (3) consecutive days.

Tournament Rule 7 – Visits to the Pitcher

Overview: *This reduces the number of visits to a pitcher to twice in one inning or three times in a game.*

Summary: A manager or coach may not leave a dugout for any reason during a game without receiving permission from an umpire. The manager or coach may be removed from the field for the remainder of the game for violation of this rule. When permission is granted, the manager or coach will be permitted to go to the mound to confer with the pitcher or any defensive player(s). A manager or coach who is granted a time out to talk to any defensive player will be charged with a visit to the pitcher.

A manager or coach may come out once in one inning to visit with the pitcher, but the second time out, the player must be removed as a pitcher. The manager or coach may come out twice in a game to visit with the pitcher, but the third time out, the player must be removed as a pitcher. The rule applies to each pitcher who enters a game.

Tournament Rule 9 – Mandatory Play

Overview: A manager's failure/refusal to insert players into the line-up as outlined in the new rule shall result in immediate ejection of the manager and removal for the remainder of the International Tournament, without replacement. The umpire-in-chief or other individual designated by the game Tournament Director in consultation with the official scorekeeper, shall advise both team managers, at the appropriate time as outlined in the new rule, of their obligation to insert all players who have not completed their mandatory play requirement.

Summary (Full rule breakdown available at LittleLeague.org/Rules): Prior to the start of play in the top of the fourth inning, the umpire-in-chief or other individual designated by the game Tournament Director in consultation with the official scorekeeper, shall advise both team managers of their obligation to insert all players who have not completed their mandatory play requirement into the line-up as outlined below. A manager's failure/refusal to insert players into the line-up as outlined below shall result in immediate ejection of the manager and removal for the remainder of the International Tournament.

1. If a team has 12 or fewer players in uniform at the start of a game, and is:
 - a. **Visiting Team:** Any player(s) who has yet to enter the game to meet the defensive requirement of mandatory play must be inserted prior to the first pitch or play in the bottom half of the fourth inning (**Intermediate/Junior:** fifth inning) into a position in the line-up that will ensure all requirements of mandatory play will be satisfied, absent a shortened game, including one at-bat.

- b. **Home Team:** Any player(s) who has yet to enter the game to meet the defensive requirement of mandatory play must be inserted prior to the first pitch or play in the top half of the fifth inning (**Intermediate/Junior:** sixth inning) into a position in the line-up that will ensure all requirements of mandatory play will be satisfied, absent a shortened game, including one at-bat.
2. If a team has 13 or more players in uniform at the start of a game, players must be inserted into the line-up to bat offensively during the:
 - a. **Visiting Team:** fourth or fifth inning, or as one of the first three batters in the sixth inning (**Intermediate/Junior:** fifth or sixth inning, or as one of the first three batters in the seventh inning), that will allow their one at-bat to be satisfied.
 - b. **Home Team:** fourth inning or as one of the first three batters in the fifth inning (**Intermediate/Junior:** fifth inning or as one of the first three batters in sixth inning), that will allow their one at-bat to be satisfied.

Tournament Rule 11 – Suspended Games

Overview: *All suspended games will be resumed exactly where they were left off. Tournament pitching will be governed by Tournament Rule 4.*

Summary: Any game in which a winner cannot be determined in accordance with the playing rules shall be resumed from the exact point at which it was suspended regardless of the number of innings played. Incomplete (not regulation) or tie games are considered suspended games. **NOTE:** A contest decided by forfeit does not constitute a “game” for the purposes of this rule, unless one complete inning was physically played before the game was forfeited. (Forfeits are only by decree of the Tournament Committee in Williamsport.)

Tournament Rule 12 – Run Rule

Overview: *Implementation of a 15-run rule after three innings.*

Summary: If at the end of three (3) innings [**Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior League:** four innings], two and one-half innings [**Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior League:** three and one-half innings] if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of fifteen (15) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. If at the end of a regulation game one team has a lead of ten (10) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. **NOTE:** If the visiting team has a lead of fifteen (15) or ten (10) or more runs respectively, the home team must bat in its half of the inning.

Tournament Protest – Use of an Ineligible Player

Overview: *This would disqualify and remove any team from the Little League International Tournament who is found to have used an ineligible player during a game.*

Summary: If the facts establishing or verifying the ineligibility of a player become known to a complainant, Tournament Official, or Tournament Director after the ineligible player participated in a game during the International Tournament, that team shall be disqualified and removed from the International Tournament, subject to any of the following conditions:

- (a) A protest is lodged by the manager or coach with the Umpire-in-Chief, who shall consult with the Tournament Director or District Administrator. The Tournament Director or District Administrator must contact the Regional Director (or his/her appointed agent), who shall contact the Tournament Committee for a decision. The decision of the Tournament Committee shall be final and binding.
- (b) The Tournament Director, District Administrator, or Tournament Official become aware of the circumstances by any means, they must contact the Regional Director (or his/her appointed agent), who shall contact the Tournament Committee for a decision. The decision of the Tournament Committee shall be final and binding.

REMINDER: The above information is only a brief summary of the rule changes that were approved. For the full breakdown of the new rules and regulations visit LittleLeague.org/Rules.