



2020 Little League Softball® Expanded Special Games Guidelines

The Little League Softball® Expanded Special Games Guide gives volunteers an easier approach to organize softball Special Game tournaments. Little League® continues to review, monitor, and update the guidelines each year to make the initiative more effective.

This inclusive guide provides modified softball playing rules to attract Little League players, coaches, and parents to our tournament setting. These regulations also serve as a platform for possible future softball rule revisions, without compromising Little League's core standards.

Specific adjustments to Expanded Softball Special Games have been made in game scheduling, participation, pitching rules, and team composition – designed to increase the competition level. Participation in some or all of these Expanded Softball Special Games also will calculate into softball players' Little League International Tournament eligibility, but only for the Junior Division and above.

The guide is divided into three main categories: Minor, Major, and Junior/Senior League. Age and physical development were considered when constructing the divisions and developing the Expanded Softball Special Games regulations. Little League-approved brackets are available online for both [Double Elimination](#) and [Pool Play/Single Elimination](#). Pool Play format guidelines, including tiebreaker procedures and runs-allowed ratio, can also be found on LittleLeague.org.

Little League is confident that these guidelines will entice softball teams and encourage leagues to coordinate more opportunities.

Except where noted in the Expanded Softball Special Games Kit, the Little League Softball Official Regulations and Playing Rules will be used in Expanded Softball Special Games for the Minor, Major, Junior, and Senior League divisions. If your league or District has alternate rules or operations it wishes to utilize for a Special Game tournament, please email Sara Thompson at sthompson@LittleLeague.org.

Failure to administer the Expanded Softball Special Games guidelines as outlined is subject to review and sanction of charter or tournament privileges by the Charter/Tournament Committee in Williamsport.

Additionally, leagues and districts must complete the proper Special Games Request Form as set forth by Regulation IX. Special Game Forms are available for [Special Games with Little League teams](#) or [Special Games with non-Little League teams](#).

Softball Special Games Kit

Minor Division Softball

The following rules are based on a two- or three-day Expanded Softball Special Games tournament. Expanded Softball Special Games under these guidelines must be approved by the Regional office as set forth by Regulation IX.

- Each Minor Division in a league is limited to three Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended rules prior to the league's first Tournament game within the Minor Division (8- to 10- and 9- to 11-year-old divisions). Any one player may only participate in a maximum of two Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended rules prior to the league's first Tournament game within the Minor Division (8- to 10- and 9- to 11-year-old divisions).
- Teams participating in these Expanded Softball Special Games during the Regular Season shall be composed of players from no more than two regular season teams from the Minor Division within the league or interleague.
- In accordance with Little League Regulation XI, no admission fee may be charged to any Minor Division Expanded Softball Special Game. Voluntary contributions are permitted.
- Doubleheaders may be played on Saturday and Sunday without affecting the teams' Regular Season play, other than the pitching guidelines noted below.
- Minor Division teams may not play more than two (2) games in a day. Minor Division Special Games with players 9 to 12 years old may not play more than three (3) games in a day if a time limit of 1 hour 45 minutes or less is imposed on each game.
- Tournament Directors have the option to impose a time limit on games, if necessary, because of the number of teams participating, limited playing space, etc.
- Tournament Directors operating a Special Game with participants 9 to 12 years old have the option to implement the following playing rules:
 - Uncaught Third Strike – The batter becomes a runner when the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are less than two outs and first base is unoccupied, or anytime there are two outs.
 - Leaving the Base on Pitcher's Release – Runners may leave their entitled base after the pitcher has released the ball.
- Regular Season pitching restrictions apply: A player may pitch a maximum of twelve (12) innings in a day. If a player pitches less than seven innings in any day, no rest is required. If a player pitches seven (7) or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest must be observed. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched an inning. The Tournament Director may impose additional pitching restrictions/limitations.
- Mandatory Play - Every player on the Expanded Softball Special Games roster present at the start of the game shall participate in each game for a minimum of three consecutive defensive outs and bat at least one time. There is no exception to this rule unless the game is shortened for any reason other than a time limit that has been established by the Tournament Director prior to the start of the tournament.
- Only regular season managers and coaches from the one or both teams are allowed.

Major Division Softball

The following rules are based on a two- or three-day Expanded Softball Special Games tournament. Expanded Softball Special Games under these guidelines must be approved by the Regional office as set forth by Regulation IX.

- Each Major Division in a league is limited to three Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended rules prior to the league's first Tournament game within the Major Division (10- to 12-year-old division). Any one player may only participate in a maximum of two Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended rules prior to the league's first Tournament game within the Major Division (10- to 12-year-old division).
- Teams participating in these Expanded Softball Special Games during the Regular Season shall be composed of players from no more than two regular season teams from the Major Division within the league or interleague.
- In accordance with Little League Regulation XI, no admission fee may be charged to any Little League (Major) Division Game. Voluntary contributions are permitted.
- Doubleheaders may be played on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday without affecting the teams' Regular Season play, other than the pitching guidelines noted below.
- Major Division teams may not play more than three (3) games in a day.
- Tournament Directors have the option to impose a time limit on games, if necessary, because of the number of teams participating, limited playing space, etc.
- A player may pitch a maximum of twelve (12) innings in a day. If a player pitches less than ten (10) innings in any day, no rest is required. If a player pitches ten (10) or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest must be observed. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched an inning. The Tournament Director may impose additional pitching restrictions/limitations.
 - Tournament Director Option: If a player pitches less than seven innings in any day, no rest is required. If a player pitches seven (7) or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest must be observed.
- Mandatory Play - Every player on the Expanded Softball Special Games roster present at the start of the game shall participate in each game for a minimum of three consecutive defensive outs and bat at least one time. There is no exception to this rule unless the game is shortened for any reason other than a time limit that has been established by the Tournament Director prior to the start of the tournament.
- Only regular season managers and coaches from the one or both teams are allowed.

Junior/Senior League Softball

The following rules are based on a two- or three-day Expanded Softball Special Games tournament. Expanded Softball Special Games under these rules must be approved by the Regional office as set forth by Regulation IX.

- Each Junior/Senior Division in a league is limited to three Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended rules prior to the league's first Tournament game. Any one player may only participate in a maximum of two Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended rules prior to the league's first Tournament game.
- Leagues or leagues combined through interleague play, may submit teams to participate in these Expanded Softball Special Games. Teams must be composed of Regular Season players within the Junior or Senior League programs in their respective division.
- In accordance with Little League Regulation XI, an admission charge is permitted.
- Teams may not play more than three (3) games in a day, or four (4) games in a day if a time limit of 1 hour 45 minutes or less is imposed on each game.
- Tournament Directors have the option to impose a time limit on games, if necessary, due to the number of teams participating, limited playing space, etc.
- Tournament Directors have the option to implement the following playing rules:
 - Courtesy Runner – Any player not currently in the batting order may replace the current pitcher or catcher as a courtesy runner at any time after they safely reach base. The pitcher or catcher may remain in the game and the courtesy runner will retain all substitution rights (if the courtesy runner has substitution rights). The same player may not be used as a courtesy runner for both the pitcher and the catcher positions.
- No pitching restrictions apply unless imposed by the Tournament Director.
- Mandatory Play – Every player on a Special Games roster present at the start of the game shall participate in each game for a minimum of three (3) consecutive defensive outs and bat at least one time. There is no exception to this rule unless the game is shortened for any reason other than a time limit that has been established by the Tournament Director prior to the start of the tournament.
- Only regular season managers and coaches from within the respective divisions are eligible to coach.
- **Regulation IX(a): Junior Division:** A player may count up to six (6) games played under Special Games against Little League teams towards a player's Regular Season schedule. **Senior Division:** A player may count up to ten (10) games played under Special Games against Little League teams towards a player's Regular Season schedule.