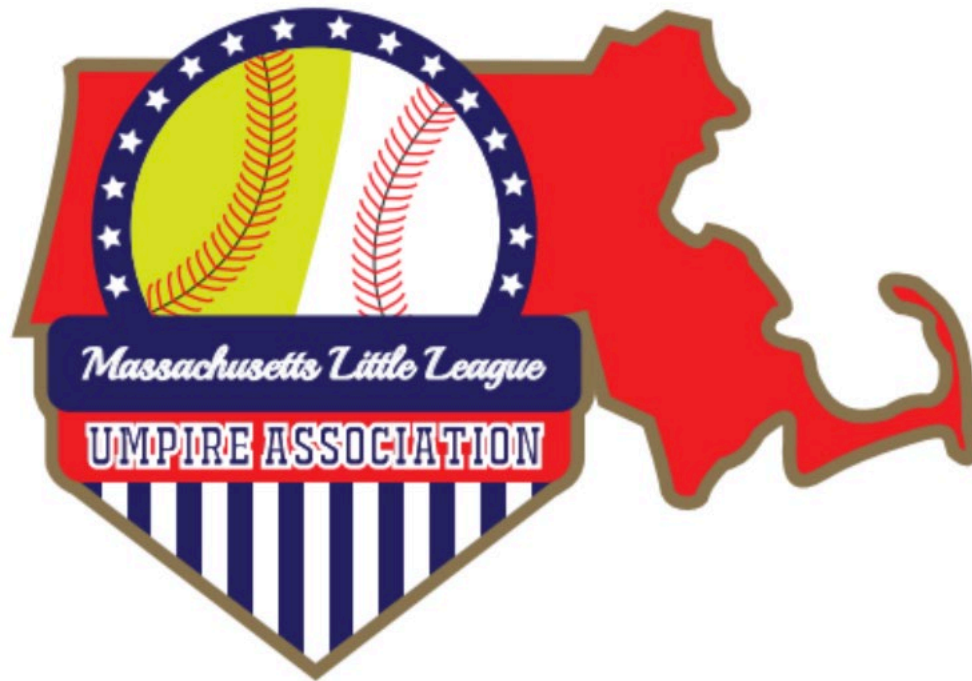


The background features a large, light blue outline of the Little League Umpire logo. The logo is a shield shape with a red banner at the top containing the words "LITTLE LEAGUE" and a red banner at the bottom containing the word "UMPIRE". In the center of the shield is a red octagon with a white silhouette of an umpire in a ready position.

**2026 Little League Baseball
Tournament Rules**

**Presented by the
Massachusetts Little League
Umpires Association**

2026-MLLUA



WELCOME

- **On behalf of the Massachusetts Little League Umpires association, let me welcome you to the 2026 Little League Tournament Season. I am confident you will find the following Tournament Rules Summary to be a comprehensive guide as to what is expected from participating Teams and Coaches & Umpires.**

- **Tom Torrisi/President**
- **Sherm Wallan/Vice President**
- **Mike Orlando/Secretary**

Tournament Rules Summary

- **Max Roster Size.....14**
- **Baseballs..... RS-T marked baseballs required**
- **Bats.....USA Bat Certification Required:**
- **For 9-10 & Major Divisions.**
- **(intermediate/Junior USA or BBCOR) (Senior: BBCOR) Penalty, batter out, (unless defense opts for result of play). Manager and player ejected!**
- **Pine tar and similar adhesives** are now permitted at all levels of Little League Baseball and Softball.
- **Thumb protectors** are allowed, but products like choke-knobs and choke-up assists remain prohibited.
- The previous distinction for **neoprene sleeves** has been removed; all sleeves are now treated the same.
- **Curfew... No new inning after midnight/Intermediate: 12:30am**
- **Seniors: 1:00am**

Tournament Rules Summary

Time Limit **No time limit may be imposed on any game.**

Pitch Count (per day)...9 &10: 75

11 & 12: 85-

13 to 16 95

Pitch Count.. 1 – 20 pitches: no rest.

21 – 35 pitches: 1 calendar day.

36 – 50 pitches, 2 calendar days rest.

51 – 65 pitches, 3 calendar days: 66+: 4 calendar days.

Seniors:1-30 no rest/31 to 45 1 day/46 to 60 2 days/61 to 75 3 days/76+ 4 days

Tournament Rules Summary

- The pitcher may continue to pitch to the batter where the imposed limit is reached until:
 - **1. The batter reaches base**
 - **2. The batter is put out**
 - **3. The third out is made to complete the half inning**
- Pitching in Multiple Games.. **May only pitch in one game per day**
- Pitching in Consecutive games **is allowed, subject to rest requirements**
- **May not pitch in 3 consecutive days regardless of circumstances**
- Pitching in suspended game resumed the next day:
- **If pitcher pitched 20 or fewer pitches, may continue – pitch count starts at zero. If 21-40 pitches, may continue – pitch count picks up from previous game. If 41 or more pitches, not eligible.**
- **(Seniors:) Same, except 30/60 pitches instead of 20/40**

Tournament Rules Summary

Pitchers once removed from the mound may not return as pitchers. (8-10 to Majors).

A Pitcher returning to mound.. Intermediate, Junior & Senior./Pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return to pitch, but only once per game.

Adults.. Baseball and Softball (Tournament Play) – Managers and Coaches in the Dugout: This would allow teams to have up to three eligible coaches permitted in the dugout regardless of tournament team roster size. NOTE: Base coaches may be adults and/or players provided at least one adult manager or coach remains in the dugout. See 4.05(b).

Tournament Rules Summary

- **Pitcher/Catcher**-A pitcher who delivers 41 or more pitches in a game cannot play the position of catcher for the remainder of that day. A player who has played the position of catcher in four or more innings in a game is not eligible to pitch on that calendar day. (threshold rules apply here too...if he finishes a batter and it goes over 40, that pitcher can still catch)
- (That means one pitch in the 4th inning)
- If player catches for 3 innings or less, goes to pitcher and pitches 21 or more pitches, cannot return as catcher (same threshold rules apply if he goes over 21 while facing his last batter) This now treats the threshold for catching the same as the game limit on pitches and the rest requirement – that the pitcher may complete the current batter, even if the threshold is crossed during that at-bat, without being considered in violation.

8.02 – The pitcher shall not

(a)(1) bring the pitching hand in contact with the mouth or lips while in contact with the pitcher's plate. EXCEPTION: The pitcher may bring the hand in contact with the mouth or lips while in the 10-foot circle (Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior: 18-foot circle) surrounding the pitcher's plate provided he/she distinctly wipes off the pitching hand before contacting the ball.

Previously, there was an absolute prohibition on bring the hand to the mouth within the 10-foot or 18-foot circle around the pitcher's plate.

Tournament Rules Summary

Baseball and Softball – Rule 6.08(a)(2):

This revises the intentional walk rule so that a player may only be intentionally walked by announcing such decision to the plate umpire **one time** during the course of the game. This would not restrict a team from throwing four balls outside of the strike zone to this batter at another time during the game. • **The batter becomes a runner and is entitled to first base without liability to be put out (provided said runner advances to and touches first base) when (a)(2) ALL DIVISIONS:**

The defense elects to “Intentionally Walk” the batter by announcing such decision to the plate umpire. The request may be made prior to or during the at-bat. A player may only be intentionally walked by announcing such decision to the home plate umpire ONE TIME during the course of the game.

NOTE 1: Such notification must be made by the defensive manager. The manager must request and be granted “time” by the umpire and then inform the umpire of the defense’s intent to walk the batter.

NOTE 2: The ball is dead, and no other runners may advance unless forced by the batter’s award. The appropriate number of “balls” needed based on the count on the batter at the time of the manager’s request to complete the Intentional Walk will be added to the pitch count.

Tournament Rules Summary

- **Substitutions:** Utilizing the continuous batting order, any player can be entered in any defensive position, be removed and re-entered at any time. **(FREE SUBSTITUTION)**
- **SENIORS:** Any player who has been removed for a sub may re-enter in the same position in the batting order.
- **Defensive Conferences..** Once per inning, pitcher must be removed from mound on second visit in inning or 3rd third visit in game. **(11's & Majors)**
- **8/10's:** 3rd visit in an inning or 4th in a game
- **(This is for each pitcher) & (Only one trip per batter) A conference with any defensive player is charged as a trip to the pitcher.**

Tournament Rules Summary

- **15-Run Rule...After 3 innings, 2 ½ if home team is ahead.**
- **10-Run Rule.. After 4 innings, 3 ½ if home team is ahead.**
- **Intermediate/Junior/Senior**
- **15 runs after 4 innings, 3 ½ if home team is ahead 10 runs after 5 innings, 4 ½ if home team is ahead**
- **3rd Strike Not Caught.. Batter is out if first is occupied with less than two outs. If first is unoccupied or there are two outs, batter becomes runner and defense must put him/her out. Runner is not out until he enters dead ball area! (NOT USED FOR 8-10'S)**

Tournament Rules Summary

Tie Breaking rule: If the game is tied after 6 innings, (7 for Int./Junior/Senior). In inning 7 (8 for Int./Junior/Senior) and all after, player scheduled to bat last shall be placed on 2nd base. (that player can still be substituted for within confines of the courtesy runner rules)

Tournament Rules Summary

- **On Deck Batters...Not allowed. Only the leadoff batter with a helmet on is permitted outside the dugout between innings.**
- **Int. / Jr. / Sr.: Allowed**
- **Batter's Box.. Batter's must keep one foot in the batter's box except for certain specified conditions.**
- **Penalty: Warning first then strike.**
- **Base Coaches...Two adult base coaches may be used at all levels, provided there is an adult in the dugout.**

Tournament Rules Summary

- **Baseball and Softball (All Divisions except Senior Division) – TOURNAMENT RULE 9 –**
- **MANDATORY PLAY:** Replaces the previous tournament mandatory play rule with a continuous batting order requirement for all divisions of tournament play except for the Senior Division. **Rule 9. MANDATORY PLAY – CONTINUOUS BATTING ORDER:** 8- to 10-Year-Old, 9- to 11-Year-Old, Little League, Intermediate (50-70) Division, and Junior League:
- **All Tournament Teams must adopt a policy of a continuous batting order that will include all players on the team affidavit present at the start of the game, to appear in the batting order. Each player is required to bat in his/her respective spot in the batting order.**

Tournament Rules Summary

If a player is injured, becomes ill, or must leave the game site after the start of the game, the team will skip over him/her when his/her time at bat comes up without penalty. If the injured, ill, or absent player returns, he/she is merely inserted into their original spot in the batting order and the game continues. Also, if a player arrives later to a game site, if the manager chooses to enter him/her in the lineup (see Rule 4.01 NOTE 2), he/she would be added to the end of the current lineup.

Tournament Rules Summary

- c. An improper batter will be considered as batting out of turn (see Rule 6.07).
- d. If a player is unable to complete a plate appearance due to injury, illness or ejection, the next batter in the lineup shall take his/her place at the plate **and assume the count of the original batter.**
- e. **If a batter becomes a runner by reaching base safely and is unable to run the bases due to injury, illness, or ejection, he/she shall be replaced by the player who recorded the last out or with a Courtesy Runner if applicable (see Tournament Rule 3 (d) Courtesy Runner).** f. **There is no exception to this rule.**
- This rule does not apply to Senior Divisions of play. NOTE: The rule replaces Regulation IV (i) and Rule 3.03 g. Managers are solely responsible for ensuring that all players fulfill the requirements of playing participation.

Tournament Rules Summary

- h. The Tournament Committee reserves the right to impose penalties (including, but not limited to removal of the manager, forfeiture of a game, and/or disqualification of the team or coaches from further tournament participation) may be imposed if, in the opinion of the Tournament Committee: **1. if a manager or coach takes any action that results in making a travesty of the game, causing players to intentionally perform poorly for the purpose of extending or shortening a game, or; 2. a team fails to meet the requirements of this rule more than once during the International Tournament, which begins with District play and ends at the World Series level (State level for 8-to-10- and 9-to-11-Year-Old Divisions), or; 3. a manager willfully and knowingly disregards this rule.**

Tournament Rules Summary

- Baseball and Softball (All Divisions) –
- TOURNAMENT RULE 3 (d, Baseball; e, Softball) –
- **Special Pinch Runner/Courtesy Runner:**
- Updates the previous tournament special pinch runner rule to apply for Senior Division only, while providing a **courtesy runner option** for all other divisions of tournament play.
- d. 8- to 10-Year-Old, 9- to 11-Year-Old, Little League, Intermediate (50-70) Division, and Junior League:

With two outs, a courtesy runner may be used for pitcher or catcher of record. Runner must be the player in the batting order who made the last out. If both pitcher and catcher are run for, the players making the last two outs are used, in order, starting from closest to home.

TOURNAMENT RULES SUMMARY

- **COURTESY RUNNER (“AT BAT” CLARIFICATION)**
- **A Pitcher or Catcher who reaches base their first time at bat may now be courtesy run for with two out and will be considered to have completed their “at bat” requirement.**

Tournament Rules Summary

- **Senior Division:** Twice a game but not more than one time per inning, a team may utilize a player who is not in the batting order as a special pinch-runner for any offensive player. A player may only be removed for a special pinch-runner one time during a game. The player for whom the pinch-runner runs is not subject to removal from the lineup. If the pinch-runner remains in the game as a substitute defensive or offensive player, the player may not be used again as a pinch-runner while in the batting order. However, if removed for another substitute that player or any player not in the line-up, is again eligible to be used as a pinch-runner.

Tournament Rules Summary

- **Protests...**
- **Playing rule or improper substitution: Must be made before next pitch, play or attempted play. (Procedure)**
- **Ineligible pitcher or player: As soon as facts become known, but before either teams' next game**
- **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, the team manager and those responsible including any player(s) and/or coach(es) shall be warned after the first offense. Those responsible including any player(s), coach(es), and/or manager shall be ejected from the game for a team's subsequent offense.**

Tournament Rules Summary

- **All Baseball and Softball Divisions Mandates batters keep one foot in the batter's box during their at-bat.**
 - **After entering the batter's box, the batter must remain in the box with at least one foot throughout the at bat.**
- **Exceptions:**
 - **On a swing, slap, or check swing.**
 - **When forced out of the box by a pitch.**
 - **When the batter attempts a "drag bunt" in Baseball [or attempts a "slap" or "slap bunt" in Softball]**
 - **When the catcher does not catch the pitched ball.**
 - **When a play has been attempted.**
 - **When time has been called.**
 - **BASEBALL: When the pitcher leaves the dirt area of the pitching mound or takes a position more than five feet from the pitcher's plate after receiving the ball or the catcher leaves the catcher's box. SOFTBALL: When the pitcher leaves the eight foot circle or the catcher leaves the catcher's box.**
 - **On a three ball count pitch that is a strike that the batter thinks is a ball.**

Tournament Rules Summary

- **Penalty:**
 - If the batter leaves the batter's box or delays play and none of the exceptions apply, the umpire shall warn the batter. After one warning on a batter, the umpire shall call a strike. Any number of strikes can be called on each batter.
- **Minor/Major Division Baseball and All Softball Divisions: No pitch has to be thrown, the ball is dead, and no runners may advance.**
- **Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior Baseball Divisions:**
- **No pitch has to be thrown and ball is live.**
- **NOTE: The batter may return their position in the batter's box and assume the new count at any time during the at-bat, unless such enforced penalty is the third strike.**

Tournament Rules Summary

- **Altercations [Baseball, Softball]- Divisions: All Baseball and Softball Divisions *Provides umpires guidance regarding fights and physical altercations during Tournament.***
 - A manager, coach, or player shall not leave their position in the field or bench area during a fight or physical confrontation; a manager or coach who attempts to prevent a fight or restore order, in the umpire's judgment, is not in violation of this rule.
- **Penalty:**
 - The umpire shall eject the offender(s) from the game immediately. Failure to comply with the ejection may result in the umpire suspending the game. The Tournament Director shall refer all incidents to the Tournament Committee who may impose additional penalties and/or actions towards individuals and/or teams up to and including forfeiture of a game, further suspension and/or disqualification.

Tournament Rules Summary

- **1. Each team needs to have a strong supply of baseballs for each game. Home team always determined by coin toss.**
- **2. All changes should be reported to scorer's table and other team prior to the start of each half-inning. Don't wait until the umpire says "play" and then ask for time to report changes.**
- **3. Make sure a player with a mask is ready to warm up the pitcher if the catcher is still dressing. Coaches are NOT allowed to warm up pitchers on the field or in the bullpen. Any players warming up pitchers in the bullpen must wear a mask with a dangling throat guard. Also must be worn during pre-game infield and/or outfield.**

Tournament Rules Summary

- **4. Any part of the pitcher's undershirt or T-shirt exposed to view shall be of a solid color. The pitcher's undershirt sleeves, if exposed, shall not be white or gray. Neoprene sleeves are now allowed (solid color, not white or gray).**
- **The use of play calling bands by defensive players is permitted under the following conditions: The equipment must be worn as the manufacturer intended**
- **(i.e. on either the wrist or forearm)**
- **The play calling band may not be attached to the belt or any other location on the player's person.**

Tournament Rules Summary

- **Baseball and Softball pitchers are permitted to wear a play calling band on their non-pitching (glove) arm, provided it is a solid color and not white, gray, or optic yellow. If the umpire considers it distracting to the batter, he/she may have it removed. •**
- **NOTE: A pitcher shall not wear any items on his/her hands, wrists, or arms which may be distracting to the batter, e.g. sweat bands.**
- **5. No cell phones are to be used on the field during the game. Keep them in a pocket on vibrate. If a team has a pitch counting app per the rules, they must notify the umpire and or the District Staff at ground rules.**

Tournament Rules Summary

- 6. Only players and coaches are allowed inside the bench area at all times. **All managers and coaches will be required to stay inside the bench area while on defense.** Coaches enter the field of play **only with permission** (after time is granted) with a legitimate purpose. **DO NOT** grant time until all play has ceased.
- 7. **Adult base coaches are allowed as long as one adult is inside the bench area at all times. Ask base coaches to not take their positions until ball is thrown down after warm-up pitches are completed.**
- 8. **No banners, posters, balloons,** or other like items are allowed on or attached to the playing field. If these items can be secured to the bench area on outside poles or fences, then this may be permissible.

Tournament Rules Summary

- **9. No players should swing or hold bats while in the dugout. Even if a batting spot is available in the bench area, there is still NO on deck position. (Intermediate/Junior/Senior Allowed)**
- **10. All scorebooks and pitch counts must be kept by a manager/coach in the dugout.**
- **11. Local League rules do not apply. (Slashing) Pulling back a shown bunt & taking a full swing is legal. There are no hit by pitch limitations or thrown bat rules.**

Slide Rules

- **7.08 (3) The rule is “Slide or Attempt to Avoid”**
- **NOT “MUST SLIDE”.**
- **If the defensive player has the ball in his/her possession, waiting to make a tag, then the runner **MUST** either **SLIDE** or **ATTEMPT** to avoid contact.**

- **7.08 (a) (4) - Head First Slide**
- **Runner is out on head-first slide **while advancing**. (NOT when returning to previous base) . (Intermediate/Junior/Senior Allowed)**

Tournament Rules Summary

- **PROCEDURE FOR USE OF DOUBLE FIRST BASE**

- On an **uncaught third strike**, the fielder and runner may use either part of the base.
- If there is a play on the batter-runner (defense attempting to retire them at first), the defense must use the **white section**.
- If there is a play on the batter-runner and they touch only the white section, and the defense appeals before they return to first base, it is treated as missing the base — **penalty: batter-runner is out**.
- On extra-base hits or other balls hit to the outfield with no chance for a play at first, the runner may touch either section.
- If the runner reaches and goes beyond first base, they may only return to the white section.
- Penalty if they touch only the white section and the defense appeals before returning to first base: **out**.
- Tagging up on a fly ball: must use the white section; one foot may extend into foul territory if the front foot is on the white section.
- Leaving base on a pitched ball (LL Major and below): must maintain contact with the white section until the ball reaches the batter; one foot may extend behind it, but contact must remain on the white section.