



Starting a Boys Fastpitch Softball Program

Starting with the 2001 season, Little League Baseball added several new divisions for those boys ages 5-18 who want to play softball.

Fastpitch softball has grown increasingly popular among boys since Little League began its softball program in the 1970s. In the 2000 season, Little League estimated that more than 500 boys played Little League Softball in various divisions. This was before any promotion of boys fastpitch softball had even occurred. Now, with a formal program for boys available, promotion efforts at the local level could be very successful, opening up new opportunities for boys to gain the benefits of Little League participation.



Divisions for Boys Little League Softball:

- League age 14-18 - Boys Big League Softball
- League age 13-16 - Boys Senior League Softball
- League age 9-12 - Boys Little League (Major) Softball
- League age 7-12 - Boys Little League Minor Softball
- League age 5-8 - Boys Tee Ball Softball

Tournament play, ending in a World Series for each division, will be played in the Boys Little League Softball Division (9-12-year-olds), Boys Senior League Softball Division (13-16-year-olds) and Big League Softball Division (14-18-year-olds) if enough teams exist.

Boys Softball Operating Options

- The district can operate the program.
- A current league can operate the program
- A separate and distinct group can operate the program (This option would allow for the creation of a new board and new boundaries)
- A fourth league operation alternative that Little League management approved is a developmental structure similar to Little League's "Second Season Program" or the Training and Development Program. This type of structure could be used for development purposes and still allow tournament participation at the conclusion of the regular season.

Promoting and Starting a Boys Softball Program

Prepare a plan to promote the Boys Softball Program district wide:

1. Have all league presidents mention Boys Softball as an additional opportunity in letters to members of their leagues emphasizing that this is a fastpitch program
2. Use the Little League Registration Promotion Kit available on the Little League web site at <http://www.littleleague.org/manuals/registration/index.htm>:
 - Customize and distribute media releases to local newspapers, radio stations and television stations.
 - Print and copy posters for distribution in schools, libraries and other public bulletin boards. Utilize the customizable ad slicks to foster interest.
 - Post a news story on the District Myteam site outlining the new boys softball program.
 - Send a message through the Myteam message center to league administrators in the district referring them to the news story and the district's plans to offer boys softball.
3. Distribute boys softball brochures at district meetings and review program options. Additional brochures are available at Little League Regional Centers.
4. Frequently survey the leagues to obtain any interested players' names and phone numbers from their registrations. Be sure to follow up with the players and ask them to refer other players if they can.
5. Contact surrounding districts to possibly combine or discuss interleague play schedules.
6. Complete Charter Application and submit to Little League Headquarters with payment for charter fees and insurance (if purchased through Little League)
NOTE : If the Charter Application has been submitted to Headquarters, simply call the Coordinating Department at Little League Headquarters and add teams to the application.
7. Submit required forms if utilizing combined team methods or interleague play.

Little League Baseball[®] Incorporated Boys Softball Addendum to the Rules

Regulation IV – The Players – (a) **Boys Softball Program:** A boy participating in the Boys Softball Program may elect to participate in an authorized Little League Baseball program while participating in the Boys Softball Program.

Regulation VI – Pitchers – Remains the same for **Boys Little League/Senior League/Big League Softball Program**

Rule 1.04 – Boys Little League/Senior League Softball Program: The outfield shall be the area between two foul lines formed by extending two sides of the square, as in Diagram 1. The distance from home base to the nearest fence, stand or other obstruction in fair territory should be 200 feet or more. A distance of 200 feet or more along the foul lines and to center field is recommended. **Boys Big League Softball Program:** A

distance of 225 to 250 is recommended.

Rule 1.07 – Boys Senior/Big League Softball: The pitcher's plate shall be a rectangular slab of whitened rubber 24 inches by 6 inches. It shall be set in the ground as shown in Diagrams 1 and 2, so that the distance between the front side of the pitcher's and home base (the rear point of home plate) shall be 46 feet.

Rule 1.09 – Boys Little League/Minor League Softball: The softball used must meet Little League specifications and standards. The ball shall be:

(a) Not less than 10-7/8" nor more than 11-1/8" in circumference and shall weigh not less than 5-1/2 nor more than 6 ounces.

Boys Senior/Big League Softball: The softball used must meet Little League specifications and standards. The ball shall be not less than 11-7/8" nor more than 12-1/8" in circumference and shall weight not less than 6-1/4 nor more than 7 ounces.

Rule 1.10 – The bat may be either a softball or baseball bat, which meets Little League specifications, and standards as noted in this rule. It shall be a smooth rounded stick and made of wood or a material tested and proved acceptable to Little League standards.

Boys Little League/Minor League Softball: The bat shall be no more than 33 inches in length, not more than two and one-quarter (2-1/4) inches in diameter, and if wood, not less than fifteen-sixteenth (15/16) inches in diameter (7/8 inch for bats less than 30 inches) at its smallest part.

Boys Senior/Big League Softball. The bat shall be no more than 34 inches in length, not more than two and one-quarter (2-1/4) inches in diameter, and if wood, not less than fifteen-sixteenth (15/16) inches in diameter (7/8 inch for bats less than 30 inches) at its smallest part.

Rule 8.01 – Boys Little League/Minor League/Senior League/Big League Softball: Remains the same as written in the Little League/Junior/Senior/Big League rulebooks.

Tournament Rules

Eligibility

Players are eligible for Tournament Play, provided they meet the criteria established by Little League for residence and the following:

Boys Little League Softball – Any player League Age 11 or 12, who has participated as an eligible player in one-half the regular season games as of June 15 on a Boys Little League Softball (Majors Division) team, or one-half the regular season games as of June 15 on a Little League Baseball (Majors Division) team, with the exception of the school baseball season.

Boys 9-10 Year Old Division – Any player League Age 9 or 10, who has participated as an eligible player in one-half the regular season games as of June 15, with the exception of the school baseball season, on a:

1. Boys Little League Softball (Majors Division) team, or;
2. Boys Minor League Softball Team, or;
3. Little League Baseball (Majors Division) team, or; Minor League Baseball team.

Boys Senior League Softball – Any player League Age 13, 14, 15 or 16 who has participated as an eligible player in one-half the regular season games as of June 15, with the exception of the middle school, junior high school or high school baseball season, on a:

1. Boys Senior Softball Team, or;
2. Boys Big League Softball Team, or;
3. Junior League Baseball Team, or;
4. Senior League Baseball Team.

All Boys will be required to select either the baseball or softball tournament team if they meet the 50 percent regular season requirement they would become eligible for the Boys softball tournament program after baseball elimination if a roster spot is available.

Boys Big League Softball – Any player League Age 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18 who has participated as an eligible player in one-half the regular season games by the start of Tournament Play in their respective District, with the exception of the high school or college baseball season, on a:

1. Boys Senior Softball Team, or;
2. Boys Big League Softball Team, or;
3. Junior League Baseball Team, or;
4. Senior League Baseball Team.

All Boys will be required to select either the baseball or softball tournament team if they meet the 50% regular season requirement they would become eligible for the Boys softball tournament program after baseball elimination if a roster spot is available.

CONDITION 1: Participation must be with the chartered league named on the Eligibility Affidavit.

CONDITION 2: A player may be named to the roster of, and practice with, only ONE Little League International Tournament Team. **EXCEPTION:** Provided, they meet the 50 percent regular season requirement they would become eligible for the male softball tournament program after baseball elimination if a roster spot were available.

If you have any other questions on how to promote Boys Little League Softball, or the rules and regulations, please contact your Regional Center.

Little League Baseball and Softball does not limit participation in its activities on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, national origin, gender, sexual preference, or religious preference.