

ASAP news



Continuing the Little League tradition of making it "safer for the kids."

2006 LLBS Updates!

New rules and optional regulations, designed to improve safety in your league are ready for 2006! Have you heard?

• New Optional Pitch Count Regulation

This option allows your league to adopt now a pitch count restriction that may possibly help your players avoid over-use injuries. From the pilot program last year by a small group of leagues.

• Break-away bases mandatory by 2008

A new rule makes disengaging bases standard for all play by the '08 season. But why wait? Replace the old style fixed bases now and immediately decrease players' potential injuries.

• Double first base use in rule book

Have trouble introducing the collision-reducing double first base because people don't know how to use it "officially"? Now this option is outlined in the official LLBS Rule Book for everyone to understand.

• Ready for league age date change?

The new age change will move the league age-determining dates back from July 31 for everyone to Dec. 31 for girls and April 30 for boys. Remember, this transition year has a number of changes allowed for a one-time period, like more than eight 12-year-olds allowed on a Little League (Majors) team. Make sure you're ready!

• Non-wood bats must meet BPF rating

Starting in 2009, all non-wood bats used in Little League (Majors) and below must be stamped with a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.15 or less. The upcoming change is for safety of the players, and early notice allows leagues to reduce the number of higher BPF bats in use.

Protect Players to the **MAX**

Do you know everyone who has signed up to be a volunteer? Do you know the risk you run in not knowing these people? Checking backgrounds beyond the minimum can prevent possible future pain and problems.

Go Beyond Minimums

The minimum all leagues must do to be chartered is to use the LL Volunteer Application Form to check volunteers against their state's Sex Offender Registry. But Rapsheets.com offers chartered Little Leagues a low-cost option that will provide a quick and easy nationwide check of all types of crimes potentially committed by people who want to volunteer in your league. And for leagues that haven't tried Rapsheets' service, the first five checks will be free!

After the first five, background checks are just \$1.50 each, regardless of how many volunteers you need to check. This same service to the general public would cost \$19.95, so make sure you access Rapsheets through the Little League website home page, or go to <http://www.littleleague.org/common/childprotect/rapsheets.asp>

Why Check Nationally?

Checking your state's Sex Offender Registry could miss people that your league would not want. Why?

- Crime pleaded down to lower offense;
- Many sex crimes not listed on SOR;
- SOR won't find assaults or drugs;
- People move away from crimes.

Many crimes can raise red flags that you wouldn't want that person to work with your children. But if the person lies on their Volunteer Application Form, unless you check, you will never know and so

can't make an informed decision. Rapsheets.com can help you find the truth, and not just about sex crimes, but also for these other crimes.

As an example, Texas lists 35,000 people on its state SOR. In reviewing all of Rapsheets.com's data, 130,000 people living in Texas have sex-related charges; almost three times as many people as listed on the SOR.

In 2005, leagues conducted almost 70,000 checks of potential volunteers on Rapsheets' databases. Of those, 8,360 crimes were discovered, ranging from first degree homicide/murder, first degree rape, aggravated sexual assault of a child, carjacking with a fire arm, child abuse-neglect, felony possession of cocaine, and on. Of those, over 1/3 were from out-of-state, so they wouldn't have been discovered by any check in the state.

In addition, you should be clear with all volunteers that you *may* do a full check of backgrounds on a national database. So if they have anything to disclose they should do so up front and explain it, or not sign up. The board should have full information when approving them. The 2006 Volunteer Application all potential volunteers must sign gives permission for you to do a full background check. Let your volunteers self-screen.

Finally, only 33 records of the 8,360 were from a state SOR, so of all the crimes discovered, only 0.3% were from sex offender registries and would have been found by following the minimum requirements. And of the 33 SOR records found, only 11 were from the leagues' home state, so the 22 people listed on an out-of-state sex offender registry would have been eligible to work with their leagues' children. Is it enough to do the minimum?

Where is YOUR Priority?

Children or Wins... Little League's Greatest Challenge



How do you find the positive and supportive coaches the children in your league deserve and your board seeks? It may be you have them, and just aren't challenging them to reach their potential. Or you may need to clean house.

Attitudes are infectious, and a bad attitude spreads faster than any grass fire. To get your league off on the right foot, help volunteers keep the right attitude when they take the field. Remember: as LLBS President and CEO Steve Keener explains, "Little League games are intended to instill the qualities of fair play, respect, and the qualities of good citizenship. Coaches need to understand that Little League is a classroom where players learn the lessons presented." And those lessons can be good or bad. This is Little League's greatest challenge, to keep the best volunteers active and help get everyone to embrace this philosophy.

Any Little League can only be as good as its volunteers. Making sure you've got people with the "right stuff" can make this year a year of successes. Or, you might not recognize until it's too late how the poor attitudes of a few volunteers have influenced your children, other volunteers, and entire league.

Little League's Greatest Challenge

It's not easy, but Little League has been reminding people of this challenge since it's inception. The flyer *Little League's Greatest Challenge* gives your volunteers a basic understanding of their role and what is expected of them, in dealing with their team, the parents, and other officials.

"In the final analysis, what happens to the Little Leaguer himself is the major objective of this huge operation called Little League Baseball," says Dr. Arthur A. Esslinger in *Little League's Greatest Challenge*. "The ultimate criterion of Little League is: Is the youngster a better person as a result of experience in the program? ... Besides such a criterion such factors as the number of games won and lost, the leading hitter and pitcher, the league championship, tournament play, etc., are all very minor considerations."

The late Dr. Esslinger, who for many years was recognized as one of the nation's foremost authorities in his field, was Past President of the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation and a long-time member of the Board of Directors of Little League® Baseball and Softball.

Players' Emotional Security

The flyer *Emotional Security and Attitudes in Children* by Dr. Luke LaPorta is one of Little League's long-standing educational tools to help volunteers understand how children differ from adults and how to help those children to develop into healthy and balanced adults. This flyer and *Little League's Greatest Challenge* are both available at Little League's website for download at: <http://www.littleleague.org/leagueofficials/forms.asp>

This publication helps adults remember how their attitude impacts the children they interact with, both on their team and

on others'. Give your new and returning coaches some reading matter, and help them understand the importance of their position has nothing to do with the number of games the team wins. It has everything to do with the experience of the children around them.

Dr. LaPorta, of Liverpool, New York, is widely recognized as an authority in this field and a recipient of the Athletic Director of the Year Award sponsored by the National Council of Secondary School Athletic Directors. He has been active in Little League for more than 40 years and served as the Chairman of the Board of Little League Baseball and Softball.

Don't Settle for Less

If you don't have good reports about a coach or manager from last year, DON'T re-appoint them. All positions are annual appointments by the league president and approved by the board of directors, and Little League does not guarantee any volunteer a coach or manager position, whether that person was a prior coach or not. If you have problems during the season, take action when it occurs. Don't let inaction make the statement: "We don't care what you do." The only way a bad situation will improve is if it's fixed.

Make sure your board understands the devastating effect offensive people have on your program. Not only do people not want to play for them, they don't want to play against them. If you've seen your number of participants dropping, it may not be competition from another sport, but more the atmosphere within your own league that's the cause. Make sure you're selecting quality volunteers and not just the first person to step forward. And make sure all your volunteers receive copies of these two great publications and are required to read them before being named as a coach or manager.

Remember, these kids deserve the best we can give them, and nothing less.



The CHECKLIST



CHECKLIST FOR LITTLE LEAGUE MANAGERS

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES - The manager's personality is an important factor in the success of Little League Baseball and Softball.	Seldom or Never (1)	Usually (2)	Always (3)
Appearance. Do you...			
1. Dress suitably			
2. Groom properly			
Disposition. Do you display...			
1. Pleasantness			
2. A sense of humor			
3. Even temper			
4. Courtesy			
5. Sympathy			
6. Enthusiasm			
Poise. Do you...			
1. Have self-control			
2. Behave in an adult manner			
Character. Are you...			
1. Sincere			
2. Truthful			
3. An example of Little League ideals			
Leadership. Do you...			
1. Accept responsibility			
2. Have the ability to plan and organize			
3. Have a good understanding of the emotional and psychological characteristics of pre-adolescents (9 thru 12 years of age)			
4. Have good rapport with each player			
5. Try to understand the personal needs and problems of players and adjust accordingly			
6. Have discipline suited to the age level of the players			
7. Discipline fairly and impartially:			
a. Temper discipline with good judgment and humor			
RELATIONS WITH OTHERS - The nature of a manager's work brings him into close contact with many people.			
With Parents. Do you...			
1. Seek their cooperation and understanding in trying to achieve the goals of the Little League program			
2. Show consideration for their opinions and feelings			
3. Display friendliness and courtesy			

Side A

Checklist for Little League Managers and Coaches to use

The checklist on this page and the following page is proposed as an aid to Little League managers so they can personally evaluate themselves with respect to those attributes regarded as important to a youth leader. By the thoughtful use of this tool, the individual manager can get a rather clear picture of himself/herself as a coach and as a person. If the inspection indicates certain weaknesses, then concentrate upon removing them to the betterment of service to the children and the program.

(Adapted from *Little League's Greatest Challenge*, by Dr. Arthur A. Esslinger)

(Side B page 4)



The CHECKLIST

Side B

Checklist for Little League Managers and Coaches to use

You can obtain an estimate of your rating by checking the most appropriate blank to the right of the question, then totaling up your score at the end of the checklist. If your answer is "seldom or never," give yourself 1 point, "usually," 2 points and "always," 3 points. Excellent is 130 and over, above average is 120 to 129, average is 90 to 119, below average is 80 to 89, and unsatisfactory is 79 and below.

(Adapted from *Little League's Greatest Challenge*, by Dr. Arthur A. Esslinger)

CHECKLIST FOR LITTLE LEAGUE MANAGERS

	Seldom or Never (1)	Usually (2)	Always (3)
With Colleagues. Are you...			
1. Friendly			
2. Cooperative			
3. Courteous			
4. Considerate			
With Game Officials. Do you...			
1. Display courtesy			
2. Respect their decisions and accept them gracefully			
3. Avoid bickering and "umpire baiting"			
MANAGERIAL DUTIES - The manager should have a knowledge of the game of baseball or softball, of its fundamentals and its strategy.			
Coaching Procedures. Are...			
1. Practice sessions well planned and conducted as coaching and learning situations:			
a. Practice sessions snappy; everyone busy			
b. Players properly taught fundamental skills and game strategy through the use of various drills			
c. Instructions given at the players' level of understanding			
2. Practice sessions ended before the players become bored or disinterested			
3. Practice sessions spaced so they do not become a chore for players and managers alike			
4. Adequate precautions taken to prevent accident or injury:			
a. Items of protective gear are used and are in good repair			
b. Players kept from reaching extreme limits of physical and emotional fatigue			
5. Players continually encouraged			
Development of Desirable Habits in Players. Do you...			
1. Encourage promptness			
2. Encourage clean living and good health habits			
3. Encourage responsibility and leadership			
4. Encourage sportsmanship and fair play at all times:			
a. Teach good manners and courtesy			
b. Congratulate opponents after each game			
c. Accept defeat gracefully			
d. Accept victory humbly			
TOTAL _____			
Excellent = 130 and over,			
Above Average = 120 to 129,			
Average = 90 to 119			
Below Average = 80 to 89			
Unsatisfactory = 79 and below			

Rules Promote Safety

Safety-enhancing features for leagues' awareness

The 2006 Little League Baseball and Softball® rules are full of safety-enhancing features that you will want to have all your league aware of. Some equipment rules will not be required this year, but can be adopted now to increase your players' safety this season. From break-away bases and double first base procedures to non-wood bat limits, safety comes first! Check it out here and see these rules in the 2006 Official Playing Rules Book this season.

Rule 1.06

... Beginning with the 2008 season, it will become mandatory that all leagues utilize bases that disengage their anchor. Leagues are encouraged to begin the process of implementing these types of base systems during the current season on all their fields so that the process is completed by the 2008 season.

NOTE 1: If the impact of a runner breaks a base loose from its position, no play can be made on that runner at that base if the runner had reached the base safely. If there is continual action involving a subsequent runner, the base plate becomes the actual base for rendering of the umpire's decision.

NOTE 2: Use of the "Double First Base" is permissible at all levels of play. See Rule 7.15.

Rule 1.10

NOTE 3: Beginning with the 2009 season, non-wood bats used in divisions of play Little League (Majors) and below must be printed with a BPF (bat performance factor) rating of 1.15 or less.

Rule 3.17

Players and substitutes shall sit on their team's bench or in the dugout unless participating in the game or preparing to enter the game. No one except eligible players in uniform, a manager and not more than two coaches shall occupy the bench or dugout. When batters or base runners are retired, they must return to the bench or dugout at once. Batboys and/or batgirls are not permitted. **The use of electronic equipment during the game is restricted. No team shall use electronic equipment, including walkie-talkies, cellular telephones, etc.... to communicate to or with any on-field personnel, include those in the dugout, bullpen or field.**

Rule 7.15

Procedures for Use of a Double First Base: The double base may be used for first base only. The base must be rectangular, with two sides not less than 14 inches and not more than 15 inches, and the other two side not less than 29 inches and not more than 30 inches. The longer sides shall face toward home plate and the right field corner. The outer edges shall not be more than two and one-fourth (2 ¼) inches thick, filled with soft material, and covered with canvas or rubber. Half the base shall be white (entirely over fair territory) and half shall be orange or green (entirely over foul territory). When using the double first base, the following rules must be observed:

(a) A batted ball that hits the white section of the double base shall be declared fair. A batted ball that hits the colored (orange or green) section shall be declared foul.

(b) Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white section of the double first base. A play is being made on the batter-runner when he or she is attempting to reach first base while the defense is attempting to retire him/her.

Rule 7.15 (cont'd)

(c) The batter-runner must use the colored (orange or green) section on his/her first attempt to tag first base. Exception: On extra-base hits or other balls hit to the outfield when there is no chance for a play to be made at the double first base, the runner may touch either the white or colored (orange or green) section of the base. Should, however, the batter-runner reach and go beyond first base, he/she can only return to the white section of the base.

(d) When tagging up on a fly ball, the white section of the base must be used by the runner. One foot is permitted to extend behind or on the base into foul territory, as long as the front foot is touching the white section of the base.

(e) When leaving base on a pitched ball in Little League Baseball (Majors and below), the runner must maintain contact with the white section of the base until the ball has reached the batter. Runners may extend a foot behind the white portion of the base, but must maintain contact with the white section until the ball has reached the batter.

(f) On an attempted pick-off play, the runner must return to the white section of the base only. This includes a throw from the pitcher, catcher, or any other player, in an attempt to retire the runner at the double first base.

(g) In Junior, Senior and Big League divisions, when the batter becomes a runner on a third strike not caught by the catcher, the batter-runner and the defensive player may use either the colored (orange or green) or the white section.

(h) Use of the double first base does not change any other rule concerning Interference or Obstruction at first base. (An errant throw into the three-foot running lane could still result in an obstruction call. Also, the batter-runner must still avoid interference with the fielder attempting to field a batted ball.)

Optional Pitch C

Protect players' arms by adopting

Are you concerned about potential injuries to young pitchers from throwing too many pitches in a single baseball game? Little League is working on an approach that will help leagues address this issue, by looking at the number of pitches thrown, not the innings.

Do you know how many pitches are being thrown in a Little League game in your league? Major League, collegiate and high school coaches keep track of these numbers on a regular basis. A new regulation option will help leagues monitor pitches and so help protect players from potential over-use injuries.

Discuss this new option with your board and decide if it makes sense for your league to introduce it this year. Please note, if adopted, this does away with the idea of an innings pitched and days rest restriction and replaces it with a number of pitches thrown and required rest restriction.

Optional Pitch Count Regulation — 2006 Regular Season

The following regulation takes the place of Regulation VI in the baseball division(s) of those local leagues choosing to adopt it for the 2006 Regular Season.

Regulation VI — Pitchers:

- a. Any player on a regular season team may pitch. (NOTE: There is no limit to the number of pitchers a team may use in a game.) **Exception: A player who has attained a league age of twelve (12), is not eligible to pitch in the Minor League.**
- b. **Junior, Senior, and Big League Divisions only:** A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game, but only once per game.
- c. The manager must remove the pitcher when said pitcher reaches the limit for his/her age group as noted below, but the pitcher may remain in the game at another position:

League Age	
17-18:	105 pitches per day
13-16:	95 pitches per day
11-12:	85 pitches per day
10 and under:	75 pitches per day

Exception: If a pitcher reaches the limit imposed in Regulation VI (c) for his/her league age while facing a batter, the pitcher may continue to pitch until that batter reaches base or is put out.

Note 1. If the pitcher reaches the limit imposed in Regulation VI (c) on his/her last pitch to a particular batter, the pitcher must be removed before delivering a pitch to the next batter.

Note 2. Intentional Walk: Before a pitch is delivered to the batter, the catcher must inform the umpire-in-chief that the defensive team wishes to give the batter an intentional base-on-balls. The umpire-in-chief waves the batter to first base. The ball is dead.

d. Pitchers league ages 7 through 16 must adhere to the following rest requirements:

- If a player pitches 61 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 41–60 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 21–40 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 1–20 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.

Pitchers league age 17–18 must adhere to the following rest requirements:

- If a player pitches 76 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 51–75 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 26–50 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.
- If a player pitches 1–25 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.

Pitch Count Regulation

new pitching code

- e. Each league must designate the scorekeeper or another game official as the official pitch count recorder.
- f. The pitch count recorder must provide the current pitch count for any pitcher when requested by either manager or any umpire. However, the manager is responsible for knowing when his/her pitcher must be removed.
- g. The official pitch count recorder should inform the umpire-in-chief when a pitcher has delivered his/her maximum limit of pitches for the game, as noted in Regulation VI (c). The umpire-in-chief will inform the pitcher's manager that the pitcher must be removed in accordance with Regulation VI (c). However, the failure by the pitch count recorder to notify the umpire-in-chief, and/or the failure of the umpire-in-chief to notify the manager, does not relieve the manager of his/her responsibility to remove a pitcher when that pitcher is no longer eligible.
- h. Violation of any section of this regulation can result in protest of the game in which it occurs. Protest shall be made in accordance with Playing Rule 4.19.

NOTES:

- 1. The withdrawal of an ineligible pitcher after that pitcher is announced, or after a warm-up pitch is delivered, but before that player has pitched a ball to a batter, shall not be considered a violation. Little League officials are urged to take precautions to prevent protests. When a protest situation is imminent, the potential offender should be notified immediately.
- 2. Pitches delivered in games declared "Regulation Tie Games" or "Suspended Games" shall be charged against pitcher's eligibility.

- 3. In suspended games resumed on another day, the pitchers of record at the time the game was halted may continue to pitch to the extent of their eligibility for that day, provided said pitcher has observed the required days of rest.

Example 1: A league age 12 pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on Monday when the game is suspended. The game resumes on the following Thursday. The pitcher is not eligible to pitch in the resumption of the game because he/she has not observed the required four days of rest.

Example 2: A league age 12 pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on Monday when the game is suspended. The game resumes on Saturday. The pitcher is eligible to pitch up to 85 more pitches in the resumption of the game because he/she has observed the required four days of rest.

Example 3: A league age 12 pitcher delivers 70 pitches in a game on Monday when the game is suspended. The game resumes two weeks later. The pitcher is eligible to pitch up to 85 more pitches in the resumption of the game, provided he/she is eligible based on his/her pitching record during the previous four days.

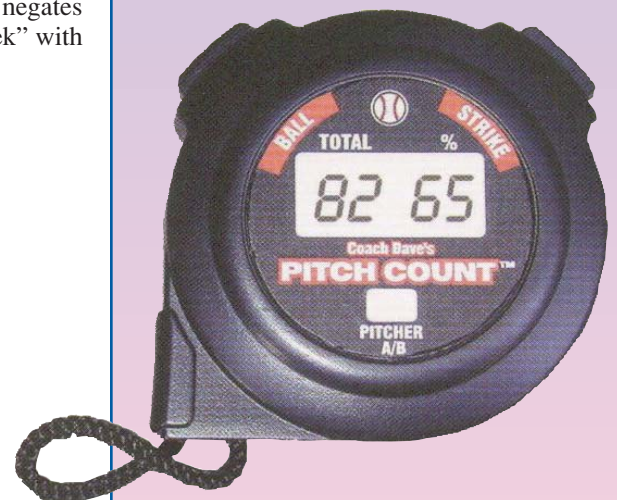
Note: The use of this regulation negates the concept of the "calendar week" with regard to pitching eligibility.

Pitch Counting Problems?

If you are one of the many leagues who plan to use the new optional Pitch Count Regulation this year in your baseball divisions, Little League may have an answer that will make it easier to implement. Keeping track of all pitches can be easy with the right tool, and "Coach Dave's Pitch Count" in the 2006 edition of the Little League Equipment and Supplies Catalog, does just that (pictured below). It retails for \$34.95.

The coaching tool is designed to track two pitchers, so for game day it can track both home and visiting pitchers' pitch counts. It also allows the coach to know the percent of strikes thrown and has several pre-set alarms to alert the coach of different pitch counts. During practice, your coaches can track pitches to guard against over-use in the same way.

The Equipment and Supplies Catalog was delivered to leagues' officers, featuring pages of products from Little League Sponsors and Licensees that can benefit every aspect of your league's operation. Or check out the information on-line at: http://www.littleleague.org/media/e_and_s_catalog1_06.asp



FAQ on Pitch Count

For Leagues Choosing to Use this New Program

1Q. Will the number of 12-year-old pitchers that can be used in a week be affected?

1A. Yes. The limit of three 12-year-olds per week is suspended for those leagues that choose to use the Pitch Count Pilot Program in 2006.

2Q. If a Major Division pitcher has completed six innings in a game, and the game is tied, will that pitcher be permitted to pitch in the seventh inning, provided he/she has not reached the limit?

2A. Yes. The criterion for eligibility under the Pitch Count Pilot Program is

actual pitches delivered — not innings. Thus, it is possible for a pitcher to pitch in more than six innings (or seven innings in Junior, Senior, Big League Baseball), but very unlikely.

3Q. What is the result if a protest is lodged because a pitcher has exceeded his/her pitch limit?

3A. As with all regular season games, the local league (by action of the local league Board of Directors) resolves all protests. The local league could decree a forfeit, or not, as it sees fit.

4Q. Can 12-year-olds pitch in the minors?

4A. No. This was an oversight in the original version of the 2006 rules regarding the Pitch Count Pilot Program. It has since been corrected.

5Q. The “automatic” intentional walk is included in the Pitch Count Pilot Program. Does it apply to any division that uses the Pitch Count Pilot Program, including the Minor Division?

5A. Yes.

6Q. If a league adopts the pilot program, can they adopt it only for one or some baseball divisions within the local league and not for others?

6A. Yes. For instance, the local league could use the Pitch Count Pilot Program in 2006 for the Minor and Majors Baseball Divisions, and not for the Junior, Senior and Big League Baseball Divisions.

7Q. Could a league extend the Pitch Count Pilot Program to the softball division?

7A. No. The Pitch Count Pilot Program is for the various baseball divisions only.

8Q. If one local Little League (using the Pitch Count Pilot Program) has been approved to play an inter-league schedule with another local Little League (not using the Pitch Count Pilot Program) what determines pitching eligibility?

8A. A division of inter-league play involving two or more local Little Leagues should be using the same pitching eligibility rule.

ASMI
American Sports Medicine Institute
833 St. Vincent's Drive, Suite 100
Birmingham, AL 35205

January 5, 2006

Steve D. Keener
President and CEO
Little League International Baseball and Softball
P.O. Box 3485
Williamsport, PA 17701-0485

Dear Mr. Keener,

During the past decade, we have seen an alarming increase in the number of adolescent pitchers requiring elbow or shoulder surgery. Epidemiological research by the American Sports Medicine Institute and USA Baseball shows a significant correlation between high pitch counts and increased elbow and shoulder problems.

We congratulate you and Little League for understanding the serious risk of overuse injury and pursuing pitch count limits. Once again, Little League is proving itself to be a leader and pioneer in safety and injury prevention. We strongly endorse your efforts, and encourage your chartered leagues to participate in the Little League Pitch Count Pilot Program. Together we can work to maintain youth baseball as a great game, and help participants stay out of surgery and on the field.

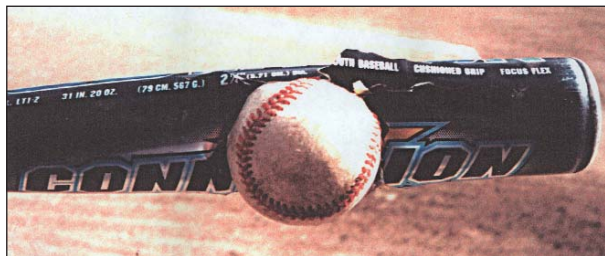
Sincerely,

James R. Andrews M.D.
James R. Andrews, M.D.
ASMI Medical Director

Glenn S. Fleisig
Glenn S. Fleisig, Ph.D.
ASMI Research Director

Equipment Check!

Is your equipment ready for the new season?



The bat ring, introduced last year, lets you check for flaws that signify a bat is no longer safe. These small dents and distortions can cause a bat to fail, in some cases literally falling to pieces.

The rules are clear: If a bat can't fit through the official Little League bat ring, the bat must be removed. Please do your players and volunteers a favor, and check all bats prior to and during the season. Remind players not to hit rocks and other hard or solid objects not designed to be hit with their bats, as this can cause the bat to crack, dent, or bulge, and then fail the bat ring test and be removed from future play.

Rule 1.10 – The bat must be a baseball or softball 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 of material tested and proved acceptable to Little League standards. It shall not be more than thirty-three (33) inches (34 inches for **Junior/Senior League baseball or softball** and **Big League softball**); or 38 inches for **Big League baseball**) in length, not more than two and one-quarter ($2\frac{1}{4}$) inches ($2\frac{3}{4}$ inches for **Junior/Senior/Big League baseball**) in diameter, and if wood, not less than fifteen-sixteenth ($\frac{15}{16}$) inches in diameter ($\frac{7}{8}$ inch for bats less than 30 inches) at

its smallest part. Bats may be taped or fitted with a sleeve for a distance not exceeding sixteen (16) inches (18 inches for **Junior/Senior Big League baseball**) from the small end. A non-wood bat must have a grip of cork, tape or composition material, and must extend a minimum of 10 inches from the small end. Slippery tape or similar material is prohibited.

No laminated bat shall be used. Colored bats are acceptable. Painted bats made of wood are not acceptable. An illegal bat must be removed.

NOTE 1: The traditional batting donut is not permissible.

NOTE 2: The bat may carry the mark "Little League Tee Ball."

NOTE 3: Beginning with the 2009 season, non-wood bats used in divisions of play Little League (Majors) and below must be printed with a BPF (bat performance factor) rating of 1.15 or less.

NOTE 4: Non-wood bats may develop dents from time to time. Bats that cannot pass through the approved Little League bat ring must be removed from play. The $2\frac{1}{4}$ inch bat ring must be used for bats in all softball divisions, and the Tee Ball, Minor League and Little League (Majors) Baseball divisions of baseball. The $2\frac{3}{4}$ inch bat ring must be used for bats in **Junior League, Senior League and Big League divisions of baseball.**

Are all your league's bats, both personal and league-supplied, able to pass through the appropriate end of the official Little League bat ring? This small plastic card can help protect your players from some unpleasant surprises during games or practices. Make sure your umpires have one for all games.

Photo above provided by Elaine Roberts, DSO, WA District 10 Little League

Right; Little League® approved bat ring (shown at 60% of actual size).



International Staff

To read the entire transcript of the International Staff "Ask Little League", please go to: <http://www.littleleague.org/askll/index.asp>; or for all past sessions, go to: <http://www.littleleague.org/askll/transcripts.asp>

The staff at Little League International in Williamsport, Pa., is on duty, assisting local Little League volunteers and district administrators in many ways.

"Is it acceptable to have a non-Board member conduct background checks, if that person is a local police officer that is affiliated with our league?"

Dave

*Little League president
Arlington, Texas*

Thanks for your inquiry, Dave. There is no rule or regulation stipulating that the person(s) who perform the checks be a board member. In the Q and A here, we suggest that the President of the league can appoint a committee to oversee the background check process.

Dan Kirby

*Little League International
Director of Risk Management*

"Is there any regulation preventing a husband and wife from being the only two signatures on a bank account for a local Little League?"

Ali

*Little League vice president & treasurer
Ohio*

Thanks for your question, Ali. No, there is no rule or regulation prohibiting it. However, it is certainly not recommended. Non-related people should sign the checks, not because they might do something wrong, but to protect them in case there is some question raised.

Melissa Singer

Little League International Treasurer

"In respect to the new Tournament rule regarding managers and coaches: That is, only two coaches allowed in the dugout if the roster consists of twelve players or less, but three coaches allowed for rosters of thirteen or more. My experience as an all-star coach tells me that three coaches are an absolute must. Please explain the logic behind the rule. Is it simply the intent to have more players participate in all-star play?"

Rick

*Little League manager and board member
Westbrook, Maine*

Thanks for your question, Rick. For several decades, we had teams consisting of 14 players with one manager and one coach, with no detrimental effects. So we KNOW that limiting the team to two adults during a game cannot hurt. However, upon the advent of mandatory play, most tournament rosters have dropped from 14 to 12, 11 and even 10. The result is that fewer players get to enjoy the tournament experience. So, if a league chooses to have less than 13 players, it does not need a second coach. Yes, we created this option for the local leagues to encourage more player participation. We have noted over the years the teams from other countries that make it to the World Series nearly always carry 14 players, and have not suffered because of it. Bottom line: Why should we NOT want to have more players participating?

Joe Losch

*Little League International Senior Vice
President and Corporate Secretary*

"I see a lot of teams with names on the back of their hats... so I am confused on why teams cannot put names or 'nick-names' on the back of their jerseys?"

Mike

*Little League Minor Division vice president
Fairfax, Virginia*

Mike, we thoroughly recommend that names are not printed on the back of player's hats. In fact, players tend to regularly wear their hats outside of Little League functions more so than a uniform. Such a procedure is dangerous as it gives a stranger access to the player's name and gives them the opportunity to gain the confidence of a child which could lead to a possible abduction or abuse. A child is more apt to trust a person who knows their name than a person who does not. Providing a child's name on a hat as a billboard breaks down safety barriers and permits a stranger to have personal knowledge of the child and the fact that the child is a participant in a baseball or softball program. Thanks for bringing up an important subject!

Nick Caringi

*Director of Operations
Little League International*

"We participated in a pitch count system for pitchers in the Majors Division. What is the status of this change and are there going to be any changes?"

Phillip

*Little League safety officer
Fayetteville, West Virginia*

Thanks for asking Phillip. We have compiled all of the reports from the 53 leagues that have participated. Little League International has prepared a report for final review and discussion by the International Board of Directors this month, and we will be updating leagues and districts after a final review.

Pat Wilson

*Little League International
Vice President of Operations*

ASAP SAFETY CHATTER

Have a question or tip to share?

Call the ASAP Hotline:

800-811-7443

or email: asap@musco.com

Answers Questions

"Is each local league required to carry accident insurance above the insurance they receive from Little League with the charter?"

Bryan

*Little League vice president
Erie, Pennsylvania*

Thanks for your question Bryan. Remember that the charter fees have nothing to do with insurance coverage or cost. Regulation I (c) (7) explains the insurance requirements for a local league. Separate fees are listed on the Charter Application and Insurance Enrollment Form for charter, accident, and liability insurance coverage. If a league elects to obtain the accident and liability insurance options on this Little League form, then additional coverage is not mandatory.

Dan Kirby

*Little League International
Director of Risk Management*

"What is the process for proposing a rule change?"

Chris

*Little League manager and board member
Boulder, Colorado*

Great question, Chris. Every three years, there is an International Congress of Little League Baseball and Softball, with a primary purpose to amend rules and regulations. In the years leading up to each Congress, volunteers from dozens of nations submit their ideas for changes to a steering committee (through a questionnaire provided to leagues and District Administrators), and an agenda is prepared. The delegates meet in round table discussions, making any necessary changes in the proposed amendments, then vote on the changes on the final day of the Congress. A two-thirds vote is required for passage. Those amendments receiving the necessary vote are then presented to the Little League International Board of Directors for final approval. If there is a rule you

would like to see implemented or changed, contact your league president and District Administrator to make sure your voice is being heard.

Scott Rosenberg

*Little League International Assistant
to the President for Special Projects*

"Whereas it is difficult to retain older age (i.e., older than Major Division) players because of the competing programs, why does Little League through the media (i.e., television) not promote our older age divisions? In particular, I am referring to Junior and Senior Baseball. It is not uncommon, for example, to have no TV coverage and very little press coverage of the Junior and Senior World series. It seems that the World Series in Williamsport is the only level that matters."

Bob

*Little League umpire consultant
Everett, Washington*

Bob, thanks for your question. Television coverage of other divisions of Little League has been expanding over the last 15 years, and Little League International continues to try to convince the networks to cover more of these worthwhile games. For instance, the championship game of the Junior League Baseball World Series is televised nationally on ESPN2. However, we cannot force the networks to televise these games. Keep in mind also that the Little League Baseball World Series had been televised for many years, long before the older age divisions of baseball (and Little League Softball) came along. We've also recently allowed local cable companies to begin televising games, which has increased exposure on television dramatically. Recently, Little League International also distributed a "public service announcement" (PSA) to every district administrator, to help in promoting leagues locally, through the local television stations. Contact your DA to see if he/she has supplied

this to your local TV stations.

Chris Downs

*Little League International
Media Relations Manager*

"Regarding Tournament eligibility and the 50 percent participation requirement, the rule book covers middle and high school baseball/ softball programs. Why can't the rule be written to cover ALL middle and high school sports?"

Reggie

*Little League District Administrator
Fremont, California*

That's an intriguing question, Reggie. If I were you, I'd lobby my fellow District Administrators and convince them to suggest that for the agenda at the International Congress in Houston in Spring 2007.

Lance Van Auken

*Little League International
Senior Communications Executive*

"Is it still taboo to go to the swimming pool on the day of a game?"

Don

*Little League coach
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania*

Don, I help administer Little League's summer camps and the Manager/Coach Education Program. I think it's a myth, although there are still many coaches — even here at the World Series — who won't let players swim on the day of a game. I'd say that ANY activity that makes you over-tired should be avoided. But there's nothing about swimming itself that makes it any worse than other activities, such as bike riding, running, etc.

Nick Caringi

*Little League International
Director of Operations*

What's Inside **Little League Reminders**

2 **Priorities**

Do you have positive and supportive coaches?

3 **The Checklist**

Checklist for Little League coaches and managers to use.

6 **Optional Pitch Count**

Look at the number of pitches thrown per pitcher, not innings.

9 **Equipment Check**

Is your equipment ready for the new season, especially bats?

April 1 Deadline for District Early Incentive

If you are trying to help your district earn some extra funds for operations, turn your plan in early. If a district has 60–79 percent of leagues' safety plans in and approved by April 1, the district will earn \$150. If the district has 80–100 percent of leagues' qualified plans in by April 1, the district will earn \$350. The district may use these funds to defray costs of helping local leagues operate their programs, including mailings, site visits and meetings costs.

Remember, your safety plan must be submitted and approved by April 1 to help your district qualify for this incentive, so don't wait! Turn in your safety plan as soon as you can, to provide ample time for the Little League International staff to review and approve your plan prior to the April 1 deadline.

May 1 Deadline for All Remaining Safety Plans

Just like in year's past, for completing a qualified safety plan meeting the 13 minimum requirements, your league will earn a 20 percent credit on your 2006 player accident insurance premium if you purchase Little League AIG Insurance. This credit will go into your league account with Little League International, and you can use the funds for any purchase: league supplies, fees or apply it against next year's charter and insurance fees.

The deadline is approaching, so we hope you are moving forward on your safety plan. The last deadline for all safety plans is May 1. Some districts may have earlier deadlines for your league to qualify for post season tournaments. Check with your District Administrator or District Safety Officer for local safety plan deadlines.

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