



# Northern Lights Little League

## Tournament Team Policy

### February 15, 2026

#### **Community Based Program First**

As stated in Northern Lights Little League's (NLLL) approved Little League Constitution, "[NLLL] shall always be a Community Based program first serving players within our geographical boundaries. [NLLL] shall not at any time adopt a travel team program mentality. [NLLL] shall be allowed to create teams that play in tournaments at the 11-year-old and above divisions, but this shall be secondary, voluntary to players at no detriment to them for not participating, and in addition to the Community Based program."

NLLL must, and will, always be a community-based program that emphasizes those aspects over any tournament team aspect.

#### **Tournament Teams Allowed to Supplement Family Needs**

NLLL also understands there are families that desire to have their kids play in a limited number of weekend tournaments from outside organizations not affiliated with Little League. NLLL coaches will now be able to provide these opportunities for players 11 and above. No player will ever be allowed to play in these tournaments that are not part of a community-based program. NLLL is NOT a travel ball organization and will never become one.

Any coach that desires to create a tournament team guided by this policy must obtain Board approval prior to the team being formed. The Board is approving the team concept and not the individual players on the team.

NLLL's community-based teams are formed with team balance as the number one goal. That means there may be times that coach/teammate requests may not be fulfilled for these community-based teams. The expectation is that players on these tournament teams will be spread out over several community-based teams for the regular season.

## **Benefits and Consequences to any Created Tournament Team**

NLLL provides significant benefits to any tournament team formed under this policy, which includes the following:

1. The tournament team can recruit current NLLL players.
2. The tournament team is covered under NLLL's insurance.
3. The tournament team can use NLLL's equipment.
4. The tournament team can use NLLL's fields for practices and scrimmages **at no cost** (This is a huge benefit as independent tournament teams hardly ever get fields without paying significant costs).
5. The tournament team has NLLL's support structure to lean on when needed.

The following consequences may be imposed by the President or the Board for any tournament coach that does not follow this policy:

- Tournament coach may be removed as a regular season Team Manager or Assistant Coach with a majority vote of the Board.
- Tournament coach may not be nominated as an All-Star Team Manager or All-Star Assistant Coach at the sole discretion of the League President.
- Tournament coach may not be approved as an All-Star Team Manager or All-Star Assistant Coach by the Board even if nominated by the League President.

## **Tournament Team Schedules Must Be Coordinated, Limited, and Not Put in Jeopardy Execution of NLLL's Community Based Program**

NLLL is willing to accommodate weekend schedules to some extent, but any tournament team established must coordinate with the league to ensure their schedules do not significantly impact the community-based program scheduling. For this reason, NLLL has established the below scheduling restrictions for tournament teams:

1. No tournament team shall schedule more than three (3) weekend tournaments that conflict with NLLL Saturday games.<sup>1</sup>
2. No tournament team shall schedule a weekend tournament in June that will conflict with NLLL's end of season tournaments.
3. NLLL will not limit how many overall tournaments a tournament team plays before the season, over Memorial Day weekend, or after the season. However, NLLL asks that tournament teams schedule an appropriate number of tournaments that ensure players are not being overplayed.

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<sup>1</sup> NLLL Saturday games start the second Saturday of April and go until the last Saturday of June, excluding Memorial Day.

4. If two tournament teams have players in the same community-based division, these coaches must work together to schedule their tournaments on the same weekends as this will help ease community-based scheduling.

NLLL will refund to the tournament team coach any administrative fees associated with cancelling tournaments to ensure compliance with this policy in 2026 assuming the tournament coach did their due diligence to proactively cancel tournaments for compliance.

### **Pitch Count Tracking Process**

Any NLLL player that plays in a weekend tournament will have their pitch counts tracked and Little League rules on pitches per day and required rest will be adhered to for both NLLL community-based games AND weekend tournaments.

The following is the process that all-tournament team coaches must follow:

1. Prior to each entered weekend tournament, the tournament team coach will reach out to their players' community-based Team Manager and get the date each player last pitched, pitch count for that day, and days of required rest.
2. By the Friday (Thursday if playing a weekend tournament that begins on Friday) before each weekend tournament, the tournament team coach will email NLLL's League President and Safety Officer with the following:
  - a. Each NLLL player on their roster.
  - b. Date each player last pitched, number of pitches, and required days rest.
  - c. List of players that are ineligible to pitch for the upcoming weekend tournament.
3. The tournament team coach will track the number of pitches each player pitched during the weekend tournament and email this to NLLL's League President and Safety Officer by Monday Morning, who will then communicate this information out to all impacted community-based Team Managers to include in pitch count books.
  - a. If the tournament team coach did not track pitches, NLLL's League President or Safety Officer will go to the tournament website to find number of innings each player pitched. An average of 25 pitches will be assessed per inning pitched. If innings pitched are not listed on the tournament website, each player will require four full days of rest from pitching.

### **Communication and Expectations Regarding Players Playing on Both Teams**

NLLL acknowledges that having players play in both the community-based program and on a weekend tournament team will at times involve issues arising between the two. NLLL expects a give-and-take from both sides on this, particularly related to when and where a pitcher pitches.

Close communication between the tournament team coach and the community-based Team Managers of their players is expected and critical for success. Significant problems may arise if this does not occur.

NLLL's General Manager will notify all community-based Team Managers of all players on a tournament team prior to any drafts or assignment of teams. This communication will include the following information:

- Each player's tournament schedules letting the Team Managers know these players won't be available on these weekends for community-based games.
- Pitch count requirements and the process between tournament games and community-based games to ensure safety between these games.
- The general expectation of give and take and cooperations spelled out in this policy.

Additionally, before the player draft of each year, NLLL's League President will convene a meeting with all tournament coaches, impacted community-based Team Managers, and families of these tournament teams to discuss these expectations and the benefits of both programs.

With the above said, it is NLLL's expectations that our community-based teams will not needlessly and consistently suffer at the benefit of the tournament teams. Meaning, NLLL will not tolerate a player consistently not being able to pitch during weekday community-based games because the tournament coach wants to save their pitching eligibility for the weekend tournaments. NLLL understands this may occur from time to time and accepts that. But this cannot be allowed to be the norm, and the community-based team should be shared in the prioritization. There has to be some give and take from both the tournament coaches and the community-based team managers. NLLL also understands that even regular season games mean something special to all players, especially those players not on a tournament team.

### **Community Based Schedules Will Not Be Altered**

As indicated above, NLLL is willing to accommodate weekend schedules to some extent for these weekend tournaments. With that said, there is no guarantee of this, and the GM or League President may schedule community-based games as needed to fulfill our obligations to all of NLLL's registered customers.

### **Tournament Team Participation vs. All Star Team Selection**

Participation on any tournament-based team in no way guarantees a spot on any NLLL All Star team.

## **2027 and Beyond**

Tournament teams will be allowed for 2026 as outlined in this policy. After the 2026 season, NLLL Board will:

- Send a survey out to the entire NLLL community seeking input on how the tournament team structure worked in 2026 and solicit input on how to improve the system and whether tournament teams should continue.
- Host a Town Hall meeting inviting the entire NLLL community to get feedback on how these tournament teams went in 2026 and desires for 2027 and beyond.
- Review all this information, along with own experiences, and will make the decision to either reauthorize or not tournament teams in 2027.

The above actions shall be conducted by NLLL's Board annually.