Annual Player Skills Evaluation

Introduction

Every spring, all players (league age 6 through 16) must undergo an evaluation as part of the League's division assignments and draft process. League age 4 and 5 players typically do not evaluate and are assigned to the Tee Ball Division; however, league age 5 players may participate in the evaluation process for the opportunity to play in the Baseball Rookie Division.

- Evaluations for league ages 6 through 12 are generally held the first or second weekend in February, with the rain date set for the following weekend. Dates, times, and locations for evaluations are generally distributed by email, on the league's website, and on the league's Facebook page as the season approaches.
- Evaluations for softball players league ages 13 through 16 are generally in March.
- Evaluations for baseball players league age 13 will occur in February for the Intermediate Division.
- Evaluations are an important part of the preseason, as they aid the league in placing players in the appropriate division with peers of comparative skill and with building even teams.
- Evaluations do not determine if a player may play within South Durham Little League. All players that are registered with the league by the registration deadline are eligible to play Little League.
- All waitlist players should plan on attending skills evaluation. However, this does not confirm that a spot has become available. It does, however, aid in the process of division assignments and drafting should a spot become available.

Evaluations

Evaluations are a station-base assessment of the player's skills in the areas of:

- Athleticism Station (warm-ups, throwing, catching, hand-eye coordination, lateral movement, and agility)
- Infield Station (a ground ball hit to the player at shortstop and a throw to first base)
- Outfield Station (2-3 depths for pop-fly balls hit to players while moving backwards, staying in the same position, and finally moving left/right)
- Pitching Station - For Kid Pitch Divisions - 60 ft (speed, accuracy, and motion/form)
- Speed Station - 90 feet (sprint recorded with start/stop on a stopwatch)
- Hitting Station (depending on the age of the player, underhand or overhand pitching from the coaches who will provide an evaluation on overall contact and power)

A copy of the baseball skills evaluation rubric can be found at the end of this document.

Baseball Divisions

In Spring 2024, SDLL will provide the following Baseball Divisions:

- Tee Ball Division (combined baseball and softball)
- Rookie Division (lower machine pitch)
- A Division (upper machine pitch)
- AA Division (player pitch)
- AAA Division (player pitch)
- Majors Division (player pitch)
- Intermediate Division (player pitch)
- Seniors Division (player pitch) offered in collaboration with Bull City Little League (BCLL)

Each baseball division follows the following league age limits:
- Players league age 14-16 must be in the Seniors Division (offered by BCLL)
- Players league age 13 may participate in the Intermediate or Seniors Division
- Players league age 12 must be in the Majors Division
- Players league age 11 must be in the AAA Division or higher.
- Players league age 10 must be in the AA Division or higher.
- Players league age 9 must be in the A Division or higher.
- Players league age 8 must be in the Rookie Division or higher.
- Players league age 7 may be in the Rookie or A Division*
- Players league age 6 may be in the Tee Ball or Rookie Division
- Players league age 5 may be in the Tee Ball or Rookie Division
- Players league age 4 must be in the Tee Ball Division

* League age 7 (or older) participants may not play within the Tee Ball division.

SDLL Softball Divisions

In Spring 2024, SDLL will provide the following Softball Divisions:

- Tee Ball Division (combined baseball and softball)
- Lower Minors Division – 8U (coach pitch)
- Upper Minors Division – 10U (modified player pitch)
- Majors Division (player pitch)
- Seniors Division (player pitch)

Each softball division has the following floor regarding league age limits:
- Players league age 13-16 must be in Seniors Division
- Players league age 12 must be in the Majors Division
- Players league age 10 and 11 must be in the Upper Minors Division or higher.

- Players league age 8 and 9 must be in Lower Minors Division or higher.
- Players league age 7 may be in the Lower Minors or Upper Minors Division **
- Players league age 6 may be in the Tee Ball or Lower Minors Division
- Players league age 5 and younger must be in the Tee Ball Division

** *League age 7 (or older) participants may not play within the Tee Ball division.*

League Age 12 Participants
Little League International mandates that all league age 12 participants must play in the Majors Division unless it is deemed unsafe for the player to play in that division. A waiver is required for any league age 12 player to play in a lower division and must be signed by the District and Regional Little League Offices.

The above references do not in any way restrict a younger skilled player from participating in a division higher than noted league age limits. Such determinations will be made by the SDLL Player Agent based upon all the available data.

Player Placement
When determining the placement of players within a specific division, there are several factors that contribute to where they are placed. The SDLL Player Placement Committee starts with determining the number of Majors Division teams first. After determining the size of the Majors Division, several SDLL policies and practices are considered, including:

- Field availability on specific days plays a major factor in determining the total number of teams allowed within a division.
- The number of players within a specific age group will determine how many spots are available in the division. Please reference the above age thresholds for league age requirements.
- Typically, players are not permitted to skip divisions from one calendar year to the next. Each division introduces complexities and game-skills in a gradual manner for proper development.
- Once players progress to a player pitch division (spring or fall), they will not be eligible to play in either machine pitch division.
- Once players progress to a machine pitch division (spring or fall), they will not be eligible to play in the Tee Ball Division.
- Players shall not remain within the same division for more than two spring seasons (baseball only). SDLL will attempt to accommodate a parental request to repeat a division, assuming it does not violate any SDLL policies or league age restrictions.
- End of season coach evaluations from the most recent season played are used in determining division assignment and draft process. At the end of each season, coaches are

asked to provide feedback for each player including skills, game knowledge, sportsmanship, specific strengths and weaknesses, and a recommended division for the next season.

- Players that have played for SDLL in previous seasons that cannot attend the current season's skills evaluation will be rated by the Player Agent and/or previous managers/coaches in order to avoid going into the draft without a ranking. Previous year, player annual skills evaluation data may also be used.
- Players that have never played for SDLL in a previous season and for whatever reason cannot attend the current season's skills evaluation, will be rated by the Player Agent.
- There are typically 12 to 14 players on each team in the player pitch team divisions, and 13 players on each team in the machine pitch divisions and 10 players on the Tee Ball Division. As a result, players are assigned to divisions in multiples of 12, 13, or 14.

The following factors are not taken into consideration when determining player placement:

- Coach Assignment – Team manager and coaching assignments are always determined based on the player's assignment to a specific division.
- Parental Request to "Play Up" – While SDLL recognizes parents want to be an advocate for their child, we firmly believe in the established process to set divisions.
- Sibling, carpool, practice/game location, preferred weekend, etc.

Many parental requests hinder the integrity of establishing divisions and the draft process, and therefore are not considered. The only exception may be that siblings assigned to the same division will be placed on the same team, unless a parent submits a request to the Player Agent requesting separate teams.

Drafting Teams
The following process shall be used during the drafting process of each division:
- The Player Agent shall rank all players in each division.
- The Player Agent shall provide the division team head coaches with the ranked list of eligible players for the division (no earlier than 48 hours prior to the draft).
- Team head coaches are required to draft directly from the provided list for that division. In the event a team head coach cannot attend the draft, an assistant coach may attend as the team representative.
- Siblings assigned to the same division shall be placed on the same team, unless a parent submits a request to the Player Agent requesting separate teams.
- Players of team managers and assistant coaches are drafted in the round assigned to them by the Player Agent. The Player Agent shall consult with the SDLL President or Vice President, coach's postseason evaluation, and the annual skills evaluation to determine the round assignment.

- The Player Agent will assign the team draft order.
- No more than twelve league age 12-year-olds may be drafted to a Majors Division team.
- Any trades between teams must be completed and approved by the SDLL Player Agent at the end of the draft and before team managers leave the draft site.
- Results of the draft shall be confidential. Players, parents, and assistant coaches are never to be told the position in which they are drafted.
- Serpentine draft procedure will be used during the draft process.

Skill Evaluation Scoring Rubric

Evaluators will use the following rubric to score players at each of the stations:

League Age	Tee Ball				Machine Pitch Divisions								Kid Pitch Divisions															
					Rookie				A				AA				AAA				Majors				Intermediate			
	-1	-0.5	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10	10.5	11	11.5	12	12.5
5	N		BS	S	AS		E																					
6	N		BS	S	AS		E																					
7			N		BS		S		AS		E																	
8							N		BS		S		AS	E														
9										N		BS		S		AS	E											
10													N		BS		S		AS		E							
11																N			BS	S			AS	E				
12																			N			BS		S	AS		E	
13																						N		BS	S	AS		E

N   Novice for Age
BS Below Standard for Age
S   Standard for Age
AS Above Standard for Age
E   Exceptional for Age