

Santa Margarita Little League - 2026 Local Rules



**Santa Margarita Little League
Local Rules**

2026 Season

Note: All rules are subject to modification upon SMLL Board approval. Last updated on Feb. 24.

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GENERAL CONDUCT

1.1

- 1.3 Unofficial Practices Before the Season.** Team practices are strictly prohibited until the official practice schedule is released. While team meet-and-greets are encouraged, managers, coaches, and players may not organize, participate in, or promote any unofficial team practices or workouts. Any violation of this policy will result in a one (1) game suspension of the manager.

GAME DAY PROTOCOL

- 2.1. Field Maintenance.** It is the home team's responsibility to rake, water, and chalk/paint the field before the start of the game. Chalked or painted lines should consist of the batter's box, foul lines, runner's lane, and coach's boxes. NO chalking or painting of team names, logos, or any other "artwork" is allowed to be done on the field. The visiting team will rake, drag, water, and put away the equipment after the game. It is the division representative's or Board-appointed field manager's responsibility to ensure there is chalk or paint in the storage bins for every game. Team Managers need to notify the appropriate representative when supplies are not available.
- 2.2. Practice Before Games.** If a team has a scheduled practice before another team's game, the practice team's player, manager/coach, and team equipment should NOT be placed in the dugout. Practice teams shall be off the field 60 minutes prior to a scheduled game to allow field prep and practice time for the teams playing the game, time permitting.
- 2.3. Scorekeepers.** For applicable divisions, the home team will provide official scorekeepers for the AA, AAA, Majors, and Juniors levels. The visiting team will keep record of pitch count and operate the scoreboard (on those fields with scoreboards). All scorekeepers are required to attend the Scorekeepers Clinic put on by the League. They are to assist the umpires and not to assist the manager in any way. The official scorekeepers are to remain impartial at all times and are not to direct any comments toward the field of play either during the game or between innings. The official scorekeepers will be positioned in the scorekeeper's booth behind the backstop. They should not be a spectator in the stands.
- 2.4. Umpire's Equipment.** The home team is responsible for ensuring that the umpire equipment is returned to the storage bins. Each bin will have an indicator, brush, and umpire gear available for use by the designated umpire.
- 2.5. Pre-game Warm-up.** The visiting team will take their field warm-up 25 minutes before the start of the game, the home team 15 minutes before game time. This protocol applies to AA, AAA, Majors, and Juniors only. On Tijeras Creek #3 only, Home team gets bullpen use while Visitor team is taking pre-game. Visitors get bullpen use while Home team is taking pre-game. If there are two bullpen mounds at a field, each team may only use one of them, at any time.
- 2.6. Post-game.** It shall be the visiting team manager's responsibility to ensure that score books, pitching logs, team flags, and any equipment is locked up after the last game/practice on any given day unless we are in interleague play, in which the Santa Margarita team is responsible for post-game duties, hopefully with the assistance of the visiting team. Additionally, while games and practices are scheduled such that each team should ordinarily be permitted an hour before game

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time for their warm-up, the reality is that is not always the case. To provide as much time as possible whenever another game or practice is scheduled to follow a game or practice, teams which have completed their game/practice shall immediately clear the field and the dugouts after a game or practice is concluded. Any “coach’s talk” or other matters should be addressed outside of the field and dugouts to permit waiting teams as much time as possible for their warm-ups.

- 2.7. Coaches in the Dugout/Field.** There may be two adult base coaches in every division during every game of the regular season as well as during SMLL local tournament play as long as there is at least one other adult manager or coach in the dugout. There must be an adult coach or manager in the dugout at all times. For AA and up, a maximum of 3 non-players (manager/coaches) will be permitted in the dugout or on the field (This is a Little League International rule). For Single A and below, a maximum of 4 non-players (manager/coaches/parents) will be permitted in the dugout. No siblings or other non-players are permitted on the field or in the dugout at any time. All coaches and managers must have completed the required training and background checks.
- 2.8. Spectators.** For the safety of the players and the spectators, anyone who wishes to sit along the foul lines must be at least 20 feet from the players’ dugout and no closer to the foul line than the distance from the foul line to the front fence of the player’s dugout. Players are not permitted to engage in conversation with people outside of the dugout during the game and vice versa (things like a parent congratulating a player or a player asking a parent to fill a water bottle are ok). Coaches and Spectators cannot play music during the game. League speakers and music are allowed.
- 2.9. Post-Season Protests.** If a protest is made in a game during an SMLL postseason game, the UIC (or AUIC if UIC is not available) will be contacted immediately at the time of protest for a final ruling. The UIC and AUIC phone numbers will be posted at the score box. The post season game will not continue until a decision is made on the protest. For all other protests, Little League rule 4.19 will be followed.
- 2.10. Absentee Player Notification.** For any player that does not attend two sequential games (injury, sickness or other reason), the Manager must notify the Division Rep, Player Agent, and Safety Officer within 24 hours of the third game. Failure to do so shall result in a one (1) game suspension of the manager. If a second offense occurs, the manager will receive a two (2) game suspension.
- 2.11. Injured Player Notification.** For any player that is injured and removed early from a game, the Manager must notify the Division Rep, Player Agent, and Safety Officer immediately. For any player that will miss a future game due to the same injury, the Manager must notify the Division Rep, Player Agent, and Safety Officer within 24 hours of that second game. Failure to do so shall result in a one (1) game suspension of the manager. If a second offense occurs, the manager will receive a two (2) game suspension.
- 2.12. Pool Player Selection and Game Participation Guidelines.** In the event that a Majors, AAA, or AA player will be out temporarily (more than 3 consecutive games) or multiple players will be missing from a single game leaving the team with 8 players for Majors, AAA, AA, and a call-up player is not required, the team missing a player must utilize a “pool-play” replacement player. The Manager also has the option to request a pool player with 9 players if they desire. Only one (1) pool player is permitted per team during regular season play. However, if a team is unable to field nine

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(9) players, a second pool player may be used to complete the roster. The need for three (3) pool players will result in a forfeit or require the game to be rescheduled by mutual agreement.

- a. **Selection Process.** Pool players will be selected on a game-by-game basis by the Player Agent from a list maintained for this purpose. The list will consist of players drafted in Rounds 4-7 from each team. The Player Agent will prioritize sourcing players with the main goal of ensuring the games can be played.
 - b. **Assignment Method.** The Player Agent will randomize the pool list and select players sequentially based on availability for each game.
 - c. **Game Participation Requirements.** Each pool player must play at least six defensive outs. Pool players will be included in the continuous batting order for the entire game. Players will wear their current team uniform during the game.
 - d. **Guidelines.** Pool players cannot practice with the team except for pre-game, cannot pitch, catch, or play on the infield, must bat last in the batting order, and cannot play more defensive outs than a regularly rostered player. Lack of Pool Player usage or forfeiting a game due to less than 8 able bodied players will result in disciplinary action by the board of directors. If it is determined by the board that a manager intentionally failed to abide by the pool player guidelines to gain a competitive advantage, the game will be forfeited, and a minimum of a one (1) game suspension will be applied to the offending manager. Failure to abide by pool player guidelines may consist of, but is not limited to requesting a pool player in an untimely fashion making it impossible to have a pool player, failing to request pool players, etc. Note: Juniors Pool play will be governed by District 68 guidelines.
- 2.13. Music.** For Majors, AAA, and AA, music may be played through non-league speakers during pregame (by both home and away teams) and in-between innings (by home team only). All music must be age-appropriate and free of profanity or explicit content. The league reserves the right to stop music at any time if deemed inappropriate.

For Single A, Farm, and Rookie, music may be played through non-league speakers during pregame, in-between innings, and for walk-up songs. All music must be age-appropriate and free of profanity or explicit content. The league reserves the right to stop music if it interferes with the pace of play.

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VOLUNTEER UMPIRE PROGRAM

3. Overview

- a. The foundational principle of Little League umpiring is volunteerism. All SMLL umpires are unpaid volunteers who serve the community for the love of the game, not for payment.
- b. The Volunteer Umpire Program is essential for maintaining a positive and fair environment for players, coaches, and spectators.
- c. Volunteer umpires are responsible for upholding the integrity of the game by demonstrating professionalism, enforcing league rules, and promoting sportsmanship. A commitment to fairness and consistency is crucial to ensure a level playing field for all teams.

3.1. General Guidelines

- a. Volunteers who have children in the AA, AAA, and Majors divisions are encouraged to umpire games in divisions other than the one in which their child is playing. For example, AA can cover AAA, Majors & Juniors; AAA can cover AA, Majors & Juniors; and Majors can cover AA, AAA & Juniors. Any exceptions must be approved by the Umpire in Chief (UIC).
- b. Volunteers from AAA, Majors, and Juniors divisions may umpire in their child's sub-division/league but CANNOT officiate games their child is participating in.
- c. Umpires may not sign up for games in their child's division until 48 hours before a game (24 hours for Managers/Coaches).
- d. Managers and coaches in AAA and Majors divisions cannot umpire in their own division during playoffs without UIC approval.
- e. New umpires should begin with Single A and AA divisions and may advance as they gain experience (requires approval from UIC to advance).
- f. The UIC and/or Assistant UIC (AUIC) cannot umpire in a division they manage or coach in.

3.2. Manager and Team Accountability

- a. Managers of Single A through Majors divisions must appoint, at minimum, two (2) volunteers (parent or coach) from their respective teams to attend both the umpire mechanics and rules clinics hosted by District 68. Non-attendance may result in disciplinary action. Managers of Rookie and Farm divisions are highly encouraged to attend both clinics, but it is not a requirement.
- b. Managers **MUST** model respect and sportsmanship in their interactions with volunteer umpires to ensure the program's success.
- c. Open communication between umpires and managers is encouraged to foster a collaborative atmosphere.
- d. It is the responsibility of the HOME TEAM Manager to provide the Plate Umpire in the event of a no-show, while the VISITING TEAM Manager must provide the Base Umpire if necessary.

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- e. An umpire team (Plate and Base) is preferred for each regular season game. Regular season games may proceed with a plate umpire alone; Single A games can continue without an official umpire. All postseason games require both a plate and at least one (1) base umpire.

3.3. Youth Umpire Guidelines

- a. Youth umpires must attend one umpire mechanics clinic (hosted by D68 OR SMLL UIC) and should begin with Single A or AA games to gain experience before moving to AAA.
- b. Youth umpires cannot officiate in their own division.
- c. Youth umpires under the age of 17 cannot sign up for a plate assignment without UIC approval.
- d. It is strictly prohibited for any individual, including managers, coaches, or parents, to confront a youth umpire directly about a call made during the game. Managers who wish to challenge a youth umpire’s call must first approach the adult plate umpire. The adult umpire will then discuss the matter privately with the youth umpire. Any individual who violates this rule will face disciplinary action.

3.4. Team Umpire Minimum Points Required (subject to change based on number of teams)

Division	Minimum Points required by last two (2) weeks of season.	Minimum points required during last two (2) weeks of regular season	Minimum points required for entirety of regular season	Minimum points for entirety of playoffs
Single A	N/A	N/A	5	N/A
AA	36	10	46	6
AAA	36	10	46	6
Majors	36	10	46	6

Note: No umpire points will be awarded for games that are canceled due to weather or other factors. However, the potential impact of these cancellations will be taken into consideration by the board, particularly if the missed points would have enabled teams to meet their minimum umpiring requirements.

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Umpire Points System

Division	Plate	Base
Single A (2nd Half Only)	1	1
AA	3	1
AAA	5	2
Majors	6	3

3.5. Disciplinary Action

- a. Teams not meeting required points may face disciplinary actions.
- b. Managers are responsible for their team's conduct towards volunteer umpires. Disrespectful or inappropriate behavior—whether verbal or physical—will result in suspension(s). Volunteer umpires are strongly encouraged to report any instances of such conduct to the on-duty SMLL Board Member and the Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) immediately.
- c. Any individual(s) ejected from a game will automatically be suspended for that game and the following one. Ejections will be reviewed by the SMLL Executive Board Committee.

3.6. Umpire Attire and Equipment

- a. Umpires must wear appropriate attire to set a positive example for all participants.
- b. **Minimum Attire Expectations:**
 - Pants: Grey or Navy (jeans acceptable)
 - Shirt: Black or Blue umpire shirt
 - Footwear: Black umpire shoes, sneakers, or athletic shoes (must be laced and closed-toed)
 - Hat: Black umpire or baseball-style hat
 - Personal protective equipment, as needed (i.e. Athletic cup for plate umpires).
- c. **Equipment provided by the league:**
 - Mask with throat guard
 - Chest protector and shin guards
 - Plate brush, indicator and ball bag

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3.7. Incentives

- a. Adult volunteer umpires who serve as Plate Umpire for more than five games, including playoffs, will be eligible to receive a discount on future player registrations.
- b. Adult and youth volunteer umpires who serve as Base Umpires or a combination of both Plate and Base Umpires for more than eight games, including playoffs, will be eligible to receive a discount on future player registrations. For each game umpired, volunteers will receive one (1) food and one (1) drink item from the Tijeras Creek Snack Shack.

% off 2027 Spring Registration (One Player)	Total Plate Games Umpired	Total Games Umpired (Plate + Base)
10%	5-7	8-10
15%	8-10	11-13
20%	11+	14+

3.8. Post Season (SMLL Playoffs / District 68 Tournament of Champions (TOC) / All-Stars)

- a. All adult SMLL volunteer umpires are eligible to officiate during postseason tournaments.
- b. All volunteer umpires, both adult and youth, have the opportunity to request an evaluation during the regular season. To initiate this process, requests must be submitted through the Umpire In Chief (UIC).
- c. Adult umpires who wish to participate in District 68 tournaments must communicate their interest to the league's Umpire In Chief (UIC), undergo an evaluation, and obtain the necessary recommendations.

3.9. Umpire CGI Self-Scheduling

- a. SMLL utilizes CGI for self-scheduling: cgisports.com/ump/2122
- b. Volunteers can self-sign up for games via the website.
- c. If a volunteer umpire needs to withdraw from a specific game and cannot do so through the CGI website, they must reach out to the Umpire In Chief (UIC) and/or the Assistant Umpire In Chief (AUIC). No umpire points will be awarded for cancellations.

3.10. Training and Development

- a. Attend the Umpire Mechanics and Rules Clinics hosted by District 68 as well as SMLL UIC.
- b. Access District 68 Umpire Resources. <http://www.district68.com>

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- c. Join the Little League umpire registry for educational resources and videos (free registration).
<https://www.littleleague.org/umpires/umpire-registry/>
- d. Download the Free Little League Rulebook available in app stores.

REGULAR SEASON PLAYER DRAFTS AND TEAM FORMATION

- 4.1 Season Draft Eligibility Guidelines by League Age.** A player may never drop below any division that he played in the previous spring year. If a player skips a year of spring play, he may end up wherever he/she is drafted.
- 4.2 Player Evaluations.** All league age 7 to 12 players will be required to attend a player evaluation day. Players will be evaluated by the Player Agent, Division Rep(s), and Managers.
- 4.3 Draft Procedures.** All upper divisions will use the Combined draft method, meaning all players are drafted from scratch each season.
 - a. Draft order will then be randomly selected at the beginning of the draft. Each draft (for AA, AAA, and Majors) will be performed in a serpentine format.
 - b. Draft cards will not leave the draft room; they will remain in the possession of the Player Agent. Cell phones will not be permitted in the draft room. No player or parent is to be contacted until the Player Agent has finalized the draft and has given the Managers authorization to do so. Any Manager or assistant coach giving out draft information prior to the Player Agent giving approval will be subject to suspension of their first game.
 - c. All draft procedures will be followed implicitly. Any situations or requests that arise during the draft that don't fall within the written rules will need to be voted on by board members present and will require a majority vote.
- 4.4 Trades.** All trades must be finalized at the draft, on draft night. Once the draft meeting is adjourned there can be no player trades. All player trades must be player-for-player and consider any age issues.
- 4.5 Majors Draft.** League age 10-11-12 players are eligible to be drafted into Majors. League age 12 players are required to be drafted into Majors (unless an exemption has been approved by the Board and District 68).
 - a. All Majors players must have participated in tryouts to be drafted or placed on a Majors team during the season.
 - b. Any league age 10 player requesting to play in the Majors division must be evaluated by both the Majors Division Rep and the Player Agent. Placement in the Majors division is not guaranteed for any league age 10 player, regardless of request. If drafted, the player must remain in the Majors division for the remainder of the season.
 - c. Any league age 10 player requesting to play in the Majors division must be drafted by Round 5. This is also contingent upon available roster spots for all 12-year-old players who have not yet been drafted.

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d. The draft round for the manager's child/children will be in accordance with the little league operating manual based on age, this is not optional.

4.6 AAA Draft. League age 9-10-11 players are eligible to be drafted into the AAA division. All league age 11 players must be drafted into the AAA Division, unless deemed as a true safety risk by the Player Agent, AAA Division Rep and President.

a. AAA Player Agent, AAA Division Rep and President will determine draft limitations on 9-year-old players in AAA, based on player registration numbers. For 2026, no more than five (5) league age players can be drafted by AAA managers.

b. The draft round for the manager's child/children will be in accordance with the little league operating manual based on age, this is not optional.

4.7 AA Draft. League age 8-9-10 players are eligible to be drafted into the AA division. Any league age 8 player that misses tryouts will automatically be placed into Single A. Managers will not be allowed to select an assistant coach per District rules. League age 11 players will not be eligible for AA unless deemed as a true safety risk by the Player Agent, Division Rep and President.

4.8 Single A Selections. League age 5 and younger, and league age 9 and older, will not be allowed to play in this division, unless it is decided by the Player Agent to be acceptable based on evaluation, and approved by board vote.

a. Any league age 8 player that misses tryouts will automatically be placed in Single A.

b. Any league age 6 player requesting to play in the Single A division must be evaluated by both the Single A Division Rep, Player Agent, or another assigned board member. Placement in the Single A division is not guaranteed for any league age 6 player. If placed, the player must remain in the Single A division for the season.

c. The Player Agent will put together the teams and ensure that talent is equally distributed since Single A is a non-competitive division. Although parent requests will be taken into consideration there are no guarantees. Once the teams are set/announced there will be no switching of teams.

4.9 Rookie and Farm Selections. The Player Agent will put together the teams. Although parent comments and requests will be taken into consideration there are no guarantees. Once the teams are set/announced there will be no switching of teams.

4.10 Replacement "call-up". When an approved replacement is required to fill an open position on any Little League (Majors), AAA, or AA team, that replacement will be selected from a list of eligible players, this is not optional. All replacement players meeting the following conditions must be coordinated ONLY through the Player Agent. Eligibility will be determined as follows:

a. All league age 9, league age 10, and league age 11 players are subject to being called up to a higher division (unless they are drafted onto a Major Division team). The eligibility of the player will be determined by Section III and Section IV of the Little League regulations and the Local Rules pertaining to the restriction of player eligibility by Division and age.

b. All replacement players must be selected within seven (7) calendar days after Manager has been notified. Once Manager has become aware that a player is not available due to injury,

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move, special circumstances, etc., he must notify the division representative immediately. Failure to do so will result in a one (1) game suspension of the Manager. No call-ups will be permitted within a month prior to the end of the regular season, except in special circumstances pending Board approval.

- c. Player selection from a lower division team must be based on the eligibility described above and on an equal rotation among the lower division teams (division immediately below the replacement team). Therefore, each lower division team must have a replacement player selected before a second player is removed from the same team.

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SANTA MARGARITA ALL-STARS

- 5.1 Santa Margarita Little League All-Stars.** Santa Margarita Little League operates under a single charter with Little League International. In accordance with Little League regulations, our league is permitted to form one All-Star team for each league age division drawn from our unified talent pool for participation in the Little League International Tournament.
- 5.2 Waiver.** A waiver may be submitted to District 68 and/or Little League Charter Committee to form a second All-Star team across all divisions. The SMLL All-Star Committee registration numbers to determine how many teams can be formed at each level. The President will inform District 68 with the final number of SMLL All-Star teams.
- 5.3** The eligible age divisions include:
- 8-9 Year-Old Division (District 68 Post-Season Tournament)
 - 9-10 Year-Old Division
 - 10-11 Year-Old Division
 - Little League (Majors, 11-12 Year-Old Division)
 - Intermediate (50/70) Division (12-13 Year-Old Division)
 - Junior League Division (12-13-14 Year-Old Division)
 - Senior League Division (13-16 Year-Old Division)
- 5.4 Eligibility Guidelines by League Age.** Players are eligible to play in a higher division if selected and approved by All-Star Manager. Players may only be selected to one All-Star team per tournament season and may not participate, practice, or be rostered on more than one team.
- When submitting their child's name for All-Star consideration, families must indicate the specific All-Star division at which they wish their child to be considered.
- 5.5 SMLL All-Star Committee.** Committee is comprised of the President, Vice President, Player Agent, Manager Coordinator, UIC, and Division Representatives, where it pertains to manager and player candidates in select divisions to ensure appropriate oversight.

ALL-STAR PLAYERS SELECTION PROCESS

- 5.6 Little League All-Star Team Selection.** The goal is to select a roster of 12 players per All-Star division team (and 14 players max), at the All-Star Manager's discretion, prioritizing the most competitive team as possible to represent SMLL. Selection to an All-Star team will be selected in accordance with Little League International's eligibility requirements for age, residency/school attendance, and minimum regular season participation.
- 5.7 Little League Tournament Team (11-12 years old) Selection.**
- a. The 12-year-old Major's players shall cast ballots for two (2) Majors players, ages 11-12 years old. The names of all the eligible players will be listed in alphabetical order by team name. The Player Agent and the All-Star Committee or board selected representative shall instruct the players to vote

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for the players who best represent SMLL as All-Stars. They will carry out the voting, count the ballots, and present the tally and ballots to the League President and Vice President for certification before the Majors Manager meeting.

- b. The Majors Managers only (no coaches unless the Manager is not available), shall meet, confer, and vote anonymously an additional seven (7) 11-12-year-old All Star players. This meeting will be called and run by the Player Agent, League President and Vice President. Once the 9 players have been selected, all Managers except for the All-Star Manager are excused from the meeting. At that time the All-Star Manager will select the last 3-5 players (based on roster of 12-14 players).

5.8 10-to-11 Tournament Team Selection

- a. The 11-year-old Major's players shall cast ballots for two (2) Majors players, 10-11 years old. The names of all the eligible players will be listed in alphabetical order by team name. The Player Agent and the All-Star Committee or board selected representative shall instruct the players to vote for the players who best represent SMLL as All-Stars. They will carry out the voting, count the ballots, and present the tally and ballots to the League President and Vice President for certification before the Majors Manager meeting.
- b. The Majors Managers only (no coaches unless the Manager is not available), shall meet, confer, and vote anonymously an additional seven (7) 10-11-year-old All Star players. This meeting will be called and run by the Player Agent, League President and Vice President. Once the 9 players have been selected, all Managers except for the All-Star Manager are excused from the meeting. At that time the All-Star Manager will select the last 3-5 players (based on roster of 12-14 players).

5.9 9-to-10 Tournament Team Selection Committee

- a. The league age 9-10 All-Star Tournament teams shall be selected from eligible players as follows: The AAA Managers only (no coaches unless the Manager is not available) shall meet and then nominate the appropriate players from their respective teams to be considered for the All Star team.
- b. After the nominations are completed, the Managers will anonymously vote for 9 All-Star players. The votes will be tallied by the Board Reps in attendance. This meeting will be called and run by the Player Agent and the League President. Once the 9 players have been selected by Manager votes, all Managers except for the All-Star Manager are excused from the meeting. At that time, the All-Star Manager will select the last 3-5 players (based on roster of 12-14 players).

5.10 8-to-9 District Tournament Team Selection Committee

- a. The league age 9-10 All-Star Tournament teams shall be selected from eligible players as follows: The AAA Managers only (no coaches unless the Manager is not available) shall meet and then nominate the appropriate players from their respective teams to be considered for the All Star team.
- b. After the nominations are completed, the Managers will anonymously vote for 9 All-Star players. The votes will be tallied by the Board Reps in attendance. This meeting will be called and run by the Player Agent and the League President. Once the 9 players have been selected by Manager votes, all Managers except for the All-Star Manager are excused from the meeting. At that time, the All-Star Manager will select the last 6-8 players (based on roster of 3-5 players).

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5.11 All-Star Player Commitment

- a. All players must sign a Commitment Letter before the All-Star election process, reviewed by the Player Agent and League President.
- b. To be eligible as an All-Star, players must have attended and played in at least 60% of their team's games during the current SMLL season (subject to change based on weather).
- c. Players who did not fulfill the previous year's All-Star commitment require Board approval for eligibility in the current year.
- d. All-Star team players are required to participate fully in the tournament(s) until the team is officially eliminated.

ALL-STAR MANAGERS AND COACHES SELECTION PROCESS

5.12 Manager Eligibility. To be eligible as an All-Star Manager or Coach, a candidate must:

- a. Have a completed volunteer form with a clean background screening.
- b. Be a board-approved official Manager or Assistant Coach during the current season.
- c. Have managed or coached a SMLL team for at least 60% of the current season.
- d. Any candidate who does not meet these criteria requires SMLL All-Star Committee approval.

5.13 Manager Voting, Evaluation, and Selection

- a. Regular season Managers cast one vote for All-Star manager.
- b. All-Star Manager candidates will go through an interview process and then evaluated by the SMLL All-Star Committee.
- c. The Committee evaluates candidates based on:
 - i. Regular season performance (current season), as well as historical coaching success
 - ii. Sportsmanship and conduct (on and off the field)
 - iii. Ability to represent SMLL positively
 - iv. Commitment to umpire and volunteer requirements
 - v. Commitment to practice and game schedules throughout the tournament period
- d. The President and Player Agent are ineligible to serve as All-Star Managers unless approved by the SMLL Board of Directors. If the UIC or Division Rep assigned to the Committee is a candidate, they are replaced by a new Committee Member appointed by the President.
- e. The President will review and make final decision on All-Star Managers.

5.14 Coaches Selection

- a. Once selected, each All-Star Manager submits two Coaches to the League President for approval.
- b. All-Star Coaches are chosen from the remaining regular season Managers and Official Coaches.

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JUNIORS RULES

- 6.1 Playing.** Rules and Pool players will be in accordance with District 68 guidelines. National Division will be made up of a team of players previously selected by a “dropped in team”. All players must live within the District 68 Boundaries. Central Division will be a traditional Little League Junior program.
- Juniors Division will be made of 12-14-year-old players. 12-year-old players will only be allowed to play in one division, Juniors or Majors.
- 6.2 Competitiveness.** This division is competitive. Regular season standings will be kept, and post-season tournament seeding will be based on regular season standings.
- 6.3 Tournament of Champions (TOC).** All Juniors teams qualify for TOC.
- 6.4 Pitching Logs.** The official scorekeeper is required to complete a pitching log and record the official pitch count (not GameChanger). Pitch Counter, Managers and the plate umpire must confirm its accuracy by signing it at the end of each game. Managers must maintain their own pitching logs and have it initialed by the scorekeeper after each game. First failure to complete a pitching log will result in a warning. Additional failures to complete the log will result in a one (1) game suspension of the manager. If a third offense occurs, the manager will receive a two (2) game suspension. Games filed under Little League protest rule 4.19 must be followed explicitly.
- 6.5 Pitch Count Violation.** Any violation of the established Little League maximum pitch count rules will result in an automatic one (1) game suspension for the Manager. This suspension does not require a Board vote or review. The suspended manager may not be present in the dugout or on the field during the subsequent game. A subsequent violation will result in an additional one (1) game suspension.
- Note: In maximum pitch count situations, the pitch counter will notify the umpire when the limit is reached, but ultimate responsibility for compliance rests with the manager.
- 6.6 Mound and Base Distance.** American: 54’/80’ the entire season, Central: 54’/80’ until Spring Break and 60’6”/90’ after Spring Break (per District 68 guidelines), National: 60’6”/90’ the entire season.
- 6.7 One Foot In Batter’s Box.** Batters must keep one foot in the batter’s box throughout their at-bat, barring eight exceptions provided in the Little League Rule Book guidelines, during regular season and post season games. 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.
- 6.8 Mercy rule.** A team shall forfeit after one team has reached a difference in score of 15 runs by the 4th inning, 10 runs by the 5th inning and 8 runs by the 6th inning.
- 6.9 Courtesy Runners.** A courtesy runner is only allowed for the Pitcher and/or Catcher of record at the end of the previous defensive inning when two (2) outs are recorded. The courtesy runner will be the player who was the last recorded out. This rule is intended as a courtesy to speed up the transition between innings.

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MAJORS AND AAA RULES

- 7.1 Common Draft.** Majors and AAA divisions will use the Combined draft method.
- 7.2 Playing Rules and Pool players** will be in accordance with SMLL Local Rules and Little League Rule Book guidelines.
- 7.3 Competitiveness.** Regular season standings will be kept and post-season tournament seeding will be based on regular season standings.
- 7.4 Mandatory Play.** All players must play a minimum of six (6) outs on defense, and record one at bat. If any player on a roster does not meet this requirement, it shall result in a one (1) game suspension of the manager. If a second offense occurs, the manager will receive a two (2) game suspension. Umpires will notify managers of this rule at the plate meeting for any players arriving after the start of the game.
- 7.5 Make-up Games.** If a game is called before becoming an official game (rained out or stopped due to darkness), the home team Manager shall notify the Division Rep. The Division Rep shall contact the designated Board Member (Scheduler) to schedule the game weather and field availability permitting.
- Make-up games in the Major and AAA divisions take precedence over practice slots another team may be assigned. The Division Rep and Scheduler will reschedule games within a reasonable time frame dependent upon field availability, with Friday or Sunday as an option. In certain instances, the snack shack may not be open during make-up games. However, a SMLL Board Member on Duty will be required.
- Doubleheaders may be scheduled for makeup games (Majors only) and all pitching eligibility requirements remain intact.
- 7.6 Rescheduled Games:** In the event that a team is unable to field enough players for a scheduled game (fewer than 8 players with pool player support), one alternative make-up date will be allowed. However, managers must notify the Division Rep of any request to reschedule at least 7 days in advance of the original game date. The Division Rep, in coordination with the Board and Scheduler, will work with both Managers to identify and confirm a mutually agreed upon make-up date.
- 7.7 Mercy rule.** A team shall forfeit after one team has reached a difference in score of 15 runs by the 3rd inning, 10 runs by the 4th inning and 8 runs by the 5th inning.
- 7.8 5-run rule (AAA Division Only).** Teams will bat until three (3) outs are reached, or five (5) runs are scored, whichever comes first, except for the 6th inning or called last inning, where three (3) outs must be reached. If any additional runs score prior to the last inning due to a ground rule double or over-the-fence home run, those runs will count in the score.
- 7.9 Continuous Batting Order (AAA-Majors).** Continuous batting order (CBO) will be in effect for the entire regular season schedule. For the local post-season tournament, AAA and Majors will utilize CBO or each team will bat 9 players according to the rules outlined in the Little League Rule Book dependent on how District 68 TOC rules are set.

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- 7.10 Courtesy Runners.** Courtesy runners are allowed and will follow Little League International rule 7.14b Note 2 & 3.
- 7.11 One Foot In Batter's Box (AAA-Majors).** Batters must keep one foot in the batter's box throughout their at-bat, barring eight exceptions provided in the Little League Rule Book guidelines, during regular season and postseason games. 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.
- 7.12 Substitutions (Majors).** During the period when CBO is in effect, it is not applicable. However, when CBO is not in effect, substitutions will be based on rules outlined in the Little League Rule Book. Improper substitution is a basis for protest. Protests involving improper substitution not resolved before the next pitch or play shall not be considered.
- 7.13 Pitching Logs.** The official scorekeeper is required to complete a pitching log and record the official pitch count (not GameChanger). Pitch Counter, Managers and the plate umpire must confirm its accuracy by signing it at the end of each game. Managers must maintain their own pitching logs and have it initialed by the scorekeeper after each game. First failure to complete a pitching log will result in a warning. Additional failures to complete the log will result in a one (1) game suspension of the manager. If a third offense occurs, the manager will receive a two (2) game suspension. Games filed under Little League protest rule 4.19 must be followed explicitly.
- 7.14 Pitch Count Violation.** Any violation of the established Little League maximum pitch count rules will result in an automatic one (1) game suspension for the Manager. This suspension does not require a Board vote or review. The suspended manager may not be present in the dugout or on the field during the subsequent game. A subsequent violation will result in an additional one (1) game suspension.
- Note: In maximum pitch count situations, the pitch counter will notify the umpire when the limit is reached, but ultimate responsibility for compliance rests with the manager.
- 7.15 Tie-breakers.** In the event of a tie at the end of the regular season (for AAA and Majors), the tiebreaker will be as follows:
1. Head-to-head record among tied teams
 2. Runs allowed head-to-head
 3. Runs allowed for the season
 4. Coin flip
- 7.16** If there are three or more teams tied and the head-to-head record criteria does not break the tie, the tie will be broken using the following criteria (in the order listed):
1. Fewest runs allowed against the opponents involved in the tie-breaker
 2. Fewest runs allowed against all teams in the regular season.
 3. Coin flip

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7.17 SMLL Post-Season Tournament. The post-season tournament for Majors and AAA will be finalized by end of spring break.

7.18 District 68 Tournament of Champions (TOC) Qualification & Division Structure.

SMLL League & Division Structure

- a. Santa Margarita Little League (SMLL) AAA and Majors divisions shall operate as single leagues for scheduling, standings, and championship purposes.
- b. The league will play as close to an even schedule across all teams as mathematically possible.

SMLL League Championships

- a. The team finishing with the best overall regular-season record in AAA and Majors shall be recognized as the League Champion and receive championship rings.

TOC Qualification

- a. Santa Margarita Little League will have two TOC qualifiers at both the AAA and Majors levels.
- b. The team with the best overall regular-season record across AAA and Majors will earn an automatic berth to TOC.
- c. The second TOC berth will go to the post-season tournament winner that has not received a berth to TOC

7.19 Awards. The first-place team during the regular season and the winner of the post-season tournament will receive awards. The runner-up of the post-season tournament will receive an award.

7.20 Time Limit (AAA). All regular season games: No new inning after 1 hour and 50 minutes.

If the game reaches exactly 1 hour and 50 minutes and is entering the 6th or 7th innings, that inning shall be played.

If time permits, teams may play one extra inning beyond the standard 6 innings. No regular season game will go beyond 7 innings.

All post-season games will be played to completion, with no time limit restrictions.

Time Limit (MAJORS). All Majors games will be played to completion.

7.21 Maximum Draft Limit of league age 9 players Per Team (AAA Only). Player Agent, AAA Division Rep and President will determine draft limitations on 9-year-old players in AAA, based on player registration numbers. This includes the maximum number of league age 9 players drafted to one team and the round cut-off for drafting league age 9 players.

7.22 Sign Stealing. Stealing or relaying signs to alert the batter of pitch selection and/or location is considered unsportsmanlike behavior and is prohibited.

- a. On the first offense, the umpire will issue a formal warning to the team's manager.
- b. On the second offense, the involved player and the team's manager will be ejected from the

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game. The manager will also receive a one (1) game suspension, to be served during the team's next scheduled game.

- 7.23 Little League Double First Base Rule (Safety Base).** Little League approved the use of the double first base (white + colored base) for enhanced safety, reducing collisions between the runner and first baseman. Official guidance includes:
- a. Defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner must use the colored portion whenever a play is being made at first base.
 - b. A batted ball hitting the white portion is fair; a batted ball that hits only the colored portion (without touching or crossing over the white portion) is foul.
 - c. On an uncaught third strike in Majors and above, either the runner or fielder may use either part of the base.
 - d. On extra-base hits or balls to the outfield where no play is possible, the batter-runner may touch either part of the base—but once they reach first, they must use only the white portion for all returns, tag-ups, and when remaining on the base

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AA RULES

- 8.1 Common Draft.** AA will use the Combined draft method.
- 8.2 Playing.** Rules and Pool players will be in accordance with SMLL Local Rules and Little League Rule Book guidelines.
- 8.3 Competitiveness.** To encourage Managers to focus on player development, standings will be kept on the website; however, all teams will qualify for the post-season tournament. Post-season tournament brackets will be determined by blind draw; there will be no seeding in the tournament.
- 8.4 Pitching Logs.** The official scorekeeper is required to complete a pitching log and record the official pitch count (not GameChanger). Pitch Counter, Managers and the plate umpire must confirm its accuracy by signing it at the end of each game. Managers must maintain their own pitching logs and have it initialed by the scorekeeper after each game. First failure to complete a pitching log will result in a warning. Additional failures to complete the log will result in a one (1) game suspension of the manager. If a third offense occurs, the manager will receive a two (2) game suspension. Games filed under Little League protest rule 4.19 must be followed explicitly.
- 8.5 Pitch Count Violation.** Any violation of the established Little League maximum pitch count rules will result in an automatic one (1) game suspension for the Manager. This suspension does not require a Board vote or review. The suspended manager may not be present in the dugout or on the field during the subsequent game. A subsequent violation will result in an additional one (1) game suspension.
- Note: In maximum pitch count situations, the pitch counter will notify the umpire when the limit is reached, but ultimate responsibility for compliance rests with the manager.
- 8.6 Stealing.**
- 1st Half:** Stealing is permitted; however, a player may not steal home. A player may not advance from 1B to 3B on a single-play steal attempt. Runners can only advance to home on a batted ball, or forced walk. With runners on first and second it is ok for both to steal the next base. If a player advances from 1B to 2B and then 2B to 3B on the same steal attempt they are at risk and are able to be tagged out. If they arrive safely at the next base, the umpire will return runners to the previous base after the play has stopped.
- 2nd Half:** All 1st half based running rules apply, except stealing home will be permitted.
- 8.7 Curveballs.** No Manager shall teach a pitcher to throw a curveball or permit their pitchers to throw them in a game. No curve balls are allowed. If an umpire deems that a curveball is being thrown, there will be a warning to the pitcher and the manager. Additional violations may result in ejection from the game and subsequent suspensions.
- 8.8 Pitching eligibility.** A Pitcher who hits 3 batters in one game must be removed from the pitcher's position. The pitcher and Manager of the pitcher will be reminded of the 3 HBP rule by the umpire after the 1st and 2nd HBP.
- 8.9 Batting.** Teams will bat until three (3) outs are reached, or five (5) runs are scored, whichever

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comes first, in any inning not played with "Last Inning Rules." The 6th inning of every game is played with "Last Inning Rules." When an inning is played with "Last Inning Rules," both teams may bat up to the same number of players or until three (3) outs are recorded: i.e., if the home team has 11 players on their lineup card and the visiting team has 10 players on their lineup card, both teams may bat a maximum of 11 players. If more than 5 runs are scored due to a ground-rule double, over-the-fence home run, in any inning not played using "Last Inning Rules", those runs will count in the score.

8.10 Courtesy Runners. Courtesy runners are allowed and will follow Little League International rule 7.14b Note 2 & 3.

8.11 One Foot In Batter's Box. Batters must keep one foot in the batter's box throughout their at-bat, barring eight exceptions provided in the Little League Rule Book guidelines, during regular season and postseason games. 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.

8.12 Overthrows. On a batted ball, a runner may advance to a maximum of one base beyond the base (including 3rd) they were going to on an overthrown ball in the field of play. An overthrow occurs when a thrown ball by a defensive player is not caught and either goes out of play or past the intended target. All runners advancing are at risk. If the runners incorrectly advance safely to more than one base, the umpire shall return runners to their appropriate bases once the play has concluded. Umpires will use their best judgement to determine if the ball is overthrown as well as the timing of the overthrow.

8.13 Minimum Playing Time. All players must play at least two innings on defense by the conclusion of the fourth inning. No player will sit out three or more innings on defense in one game. Exceptions may be made by the Division Rep or current game Umpire. Failure to meet minimum will result in a one (1) game suspension of the manager.

Infield Play: All players must play at least one complete inning each game in an infield position by the conclusion of the 4th inning and 2 complete innings in the infield by the conclusion of the 6th inning. Time permitting. Exceptions may be made by the Division Rep. Failure to meet minimum will result in a one (1) game suspension of the manager.

8.14 Infield Fly Rule. The infield fly rule does not apply.

8.15 Time Limit. All regular season games: No new inning after 1 hour and 30 minutes, with drop dead time limit of 2 hours.

If the game reaches exactly 1 hour and 30 minutes, and is entering the 6th inning, that inning shall be played. If time permits, teams may play one extra inning beyond the standard 6 innings. No regular season game will go beyond 7 innings.

All post-season games will be played to completion, with no time limit restrictions.

8.16 Last Inning Scoring. If the home team does not finish their at bats (either three outs or reaching maximum number of batters) before 2 hour drop dead time limit, the score will revert back to the previous inning.

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Each team will bat until either three (3) outs are recorded or the offensive team has batted through the order to the maximum number of batters on either batting order. (See rule 8.9). Excessive changing of personnel in order to burn time to affect the outcome of a game will be judged by the plate umpire. The plate umpire can opt to no longer allow pitching changes, unless there is an injury to the pitcher, or extend the game to allow its completion.

- 8.17 Substitution.** There will be open substitutions (except pitching).
- 8.18 Awards.** Awards will be awarded to the winner and runner-up of the post-season tournament.
- 8.19 Post-Season Tournament.** The post-season tournament will be in a double-elimination format with the top two teams advancing to a championship game. Team seeding will be done by blind draw. Managers have the option to be present at the Tournament seeding drawing. Tournament structure Games 1 and 2 in the Tournament structure will not be back-to-back days to ensure any first round bye teams do not have an additional advantage when playing a team who has already played one game. The structure is subject to change and will be finalized by end of Spring Break.
- 8.20 Mercy rule.** A team shall forfeit after one team has reached a difference in score of 15 runs by the 3rd inning, 10 runs by the 4th inning and 8 runs by the 5th inning.
- 8.21 Sign Stealing.** Stealing or relaying signs to alert the batter of pitch selection and/or location is considered unsportsmanlike behavior and is prohibited.
- c. On the first offense, the umpire will issue a formal warning to the team's manager.
 - d. On the second offense, the involved player and the team's manager will be ejected from the game. The manager will also receive a one (1) game suspension, to be served during the team's next scheduled game.
- Ejections will occur during a dead ball situation and do not result in an automatic out. Umpire judgment on sign stealing is not subject to protest. Umpires should remind both managers during the pregame plate meeting that sign stealing will be monitored and penalized accordingly.
- 8.22 Little League Double First Base Rule (Safety Base).** Little League approved the use of the double first base (white + colored base) for enhanced safety, reducing collisions between the runner and first baseman. Official guidance includes:
- a. Defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner must use the colored portion whenever a play is being made at first base.
 - b. A batted ball hitting the white portion is fair; a batted ball that hits only the colored portion (without touching or crossing over the white portion) is foul.
 - c. On an uncaught third strike in Majors and above, either the runner or fielder may use either part of the base.
 - d. On extra-base hits or balls to the outfield where no play is possible, the batter-runner may touch either part of the base—but once they reach first, they must use only the white portion for all returns, tag-ups, and when remaining on the base.

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SINGLE A DIVISION RULES

- 9.1 Playing.** Playing Rules will be in accordance with SMLL Local Rules and Little League Rule Book guidelines.
- 9.2 Non-competitive.** The Single A Division shall be non-competitive. There will be no standings, playoffs, or makeup games, and no official scores are kept.
- 9.3 Time Limit.** All games will be six innings, time permitting. No new inning will start after 1 hour and 30 minutes.
- 9.4 Players in the Field.** Each team shall have 9 defensive players – three in the outfield. No additional infielders. Pitcher's position requires a batting helmet to be worn by the player when the pitching machine is used in game play. Pitchers must be positioned behind the pitching machine (to the left or right side) with one foot touching the pitching circle. Manager or coach who is pitching is not allowed to be part of any play.
- 9.5 Coaches in the Field.** To encourage player development, a maximum of 2 coaches may be on the field while their team is on defense. The offensive team is allowed to have a coach or League approved volunteer as a 1st and 3rd base coach. There must be at least one coach or League approved volunteer in the dugout at all times.
- 9.6 Minimum Playing Time.** On Defense, no player shall sit out a second inning until all players have sat out one inning. No player shall ever sit out three innings on defense in one game. Each player shall play at least two innings in the infield by the conclusion of the fourth inning and three innings in the infield by the conclusion of the sixth inning (time permitting). Exceptions to both of these rules may be made by the Division Rep.
- 9.7 Number of Batters per Inning.** Teams will bat until three outs or seven batters, whichever comes first regardless of the number of players in attendance at the game. Defensive outs ARE recorded.
- 9.8 Continuous Batting Order.** Continuous batting order (CBO) will be in effect for the entire regular season.
- 9.9 Bunting.** Bunting is not allowed.
- 9.10 Stealing.** Stealing is not allowed.
- 9.11 Balls Hit Into Play.** When the ball is hit, the batter has the option to advance to each base at his/her own risk. Play stops and the ball is dead when 1. Pitcher has possession of the ball, or 2. One overthrow has occurred, 3. Ball enters the infield dirt when being thrown from the outfield. A ball hitting the pitching machine OR coming to rest underneath the pitching machine is a "single" AND a dead ball.
- 9.12 Overthrows.** An overthrow occurs when a thrown ball by a defensive player is not caught and either goes out of play or past the intended target. All runners may advance a maximum of one base on an overthrown ball in the field of play regardless of additional overthrows.
- 9.13 Outfielders.** Outfielders must be at least 20' away from infield dirt. Outfielders are not allowed to run the ball into the infield to make the out or play an infield position unless necessary while

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backing up an infield player. If the outfielder does run into the infield to make the out, the base runner will not be considered put out.

9.14 Season Format. The first half of the season will be machine pitch. The pitching machine will be set at approximately 35-40 mph from approx. 46' feet in the 1st half of the season.

In the second half of the season, the first four innings will be machine pitch, followed by kid pitch in the final two innings. Players will pitch from either the 46' pitcher's plate or the 42' pitcher's plate (machine will be removed).

9.15 Number Of Pitches. The batter shall receive six pitches from the machine. If the ball is not put in play by the sixth pitch / sixth swing attempt the player will be recorded as an out. However, if the sixth pitch is fouled off, the batter may keep hitting until a swing and miss or ball hit into play. In the second half of the season, the player-pitcher will pitch until either the ball is put in play, the batter strikes out, or four (4) balls are thrown. If the ball is put in play, the result of the play will determine the action with the batter/runner. If the pitcher throws four (4) balls prior to the batter striking out or putting the ball in play, the coach will then pitch three (3) pitches to the batter at which point the ball is either put in play or the batter strikes out.

9.16 Walks. No walks are allowed.

9.17 Infield Fly Rule. The infield fly rule does not apply.

9.18 Umpires. A volunteer umpire from one team may umpire the game from the infield. In the first half, the umpire does not call balls or strikes. The umpire only makes defensive calls. In the 2nd half, the umpire may call balls and strikes from behind the pitcher or catcher.

9.19 Awards. Awards are awarded to all Single A players.

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FARM DIVISION RULES

- 10.1** Playing Rules will be in accordance with SMLL Local Rules and Little League Rule Book guidelines.
- 10.2** **Player's Age.** League age 5 and league age 6 players who have played one (1) year of Rookie Division will be eligible for the Farm Division. No league age 4 players are eligible for Farm. League age 7 players are not eligible for Farm unless approval from the Player Agent.
- 10.3** **Noncompetitive.** The Farm Division shall be non-competitive. There will be no standings or playoffs and no official scores are kept. Make-up games are not guaranteed and may be rescheduled if possible. Defensive outs ARE recorded.
- 10.4** **Game Day Format.** All games will be 6 innings, time permitting. Managers should suggest players arrive 15 minutes early before the start time to warm up. No new inning after 1hr 30mins.
- 10.5** **Players in the Field.** Each team shall have 10 defensive players – four in the outfield. No additional infielders. Pitcher's position requires a batting helmet to be worn by the player during 2nd half machine pitch season. Manager or coach who is pitching is not allowed to be part of any play.
- 10.6** **Coaches in the Field.** To encourage player development, a max of 3 coaches or League approved volunteers may be on the field while their team is on defense. The offensive team is allowed to have a coach or League approved volunteer as a 1st and 3rd base coach. There must be at least one coach or League approved volunteer in both dugouts at all times.
- 10.7** **Minimum Playing.** On Defense, no player shall sit out a second inning until all players have sat out one inning. No player shall ever sit out three innings on defense in one game. Each player shall play at least two innings in the infield by the conclusion of the fourth inning and three innings in the infield by the conclusion of the sixth inning (time permitting). Exceptions to both of these rules may be made by the Division Rep.
- 10.8** **Number of Batters per Inning.** Teams will bat until three outs or seven batters, whichever comes first regardless of the number of players in attendance at the game. The 7th batter (last) of the inning after hitting the ball will get to advance to the earned base as a result of the given play then the ball is dead. Batter/runners will not advance through the remaining bases to home plate, but will immediately vacate the field.
- 10.9** **Season Format.** The first half of the season will be coach pitch (20'-25'). The second half of the season will be machine pitch (38'). 2nd half of the season begins after Spring Break.
- 10.10** **Pitching Distance.** The coach will pitch from a spot approximately 20'-25' feet from home plate. Coaches should pitch from their knees or sitting on a bucket. Standing up to pitch a ball is not allowed. For the second half of the season the pitching machine will be placed at approximately 38'. A permanent plastic feather is located in the dirt or grass for reference. The speed of the machine should be set at an appropriate speed for a strike to be delivered (est. 34- 36mph).
- 10.11** **Number of Pitches.** Batters will receive six (6) pitches. If the ball is not put in play after the sixth pitch, a tee will be used. If the sixth pitch is fouled off, the batter may keep hitting until a swing and miss or ball hit into play. These rules apply to both 1st and 2nd half season formats.

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- 10.12 Pitcher.** By rule, an eligible Manager or Coach should pitch to their own team. However, an alternative eligible Manager or Coach from the other team may pitch to both teams by prearranged mutual agreement.
- 10.13 Infield Fly Rule.** The infield fly rule does not apply.
- 10.14 Overthrows.** All runners may advance a maximum of one base on an overthrown ball in the field of play regardless of additional overthrows. Unless there is a dead ball, the runners advance at their own risk.
- 10.15 Balls Hit Into Play.** Hits within the 10 foot arc from home plate are considered a foul ball. With a ball hit to the outfield, the batter has the option to advance to 2nd base (a double) but may not advance any further regardless of overthrows or distance of the ball hit. No triples or home runs allowed. The ball is dead as soon as a defensive outfielder throws to the infield dirt. A ball hitting the pitching Manager or Coach is a single and a dead ball.
- 10.16 Outfielders.** Outfielders must be at least 20' away from infield dirt. Outfielders are not allowed to run the ball in to make the out or play an infield position unless necessary while backing up an infield player. If the outfielder does run in the ball to make the out, the base runner will not be considered put out.
- 10.17 Umpires.** The offensive coaches will be the umpires.
- 10.18 Bunting.** Bunting is not allowed.
- 10.19 Stealing.** Stealing is not allowed.
- 10.20 Baseballs.** The ball being used will be a softer RIF baseball for both coach pitch AND machine pitch. No hard ball to be used during second half machine pitch season.
- 10.21 Awards.** Awards are awarded to all Farm players.
- 10.22 Catchers.** Catchers making a play at home plate must not stand in the baseline or on the home plate when making a tag. Managers/Coaches are not allowed to assist the Catcher with force outs but can move the catcher to a proper position to avoid a collision.

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ROOKIE DIVISION RULES

- 11.1** Playing Rules will be in accordance with SMLL Local Rules and Little League Rule Book guidelines.
- 11.2 Player Age.** All league age 4 & league age 5 players who have never played Little League are eligible for Rookie Division. League age 6 players who have never played in Little League can be considered for Rookie but only with the approval of Player Agent.
- 11.3 Noncompetitive.** The Rookie Division shall be non-competitive. There will be no standings or playoffs, and no official scores are kept. Make-up games are not guaranteed and may be rescheduled if possible. Defensive outs NOT recorded.
- 11.4 Game Day Format.** All games will be 6 innings, time permitting. Managers should suggest players arrive 15 minutes early before Field Start Time to warm up. Games are to start at the scheduled time, and the time clock starts with that scheduled time. No new innings after 1hr 30mins. All games will be on Saturdays. Weekdays will consist of (1) 45-60 minute practice per team. The season will consist of (10-12) games.
- 11.5 Players in the Field.** Each team shall have 10 defensive players – four in the outfield. No additional infielders.
- 11.6 Coaches in the Field.** To encourage player development, a maximum of 3 coaches may be on the field while their team is on defense. Managers or coaches in the field are not allowed to be part of any play. The offensive team is allowed to have a coach or League approved volunteer as a 1st and 3rd base coach. There must be at least one coach or League approved volunteer in both dugouts at all times.
- 11.7 Minimum Playing Time.** On Defense, no player shall sit out a second inning until all players have sat out one inning. No player shall ever sit out three innings on defense in one game. Each player shall play at least two innings in the infield by the conclusion of the fourth inning and three innings in the infield by the conclusion of the sixth inning (time permitting). Exceptions to both of these rules may be made by the Division Rep.
- 11.8 Number of Batters per Inning.** At coaches' discretion, the offensive team will bat seven players (regardless of the number of players in attendance at the game) and then the inning will be over. Defense can make outs and the runner or batter must vacate the playing field (go to the dugout) if an out is made against them. However, THE OUT IS NOT RECORDED meaning, 3 defensive outs does not result in the end of the inning. The 7th batter (last) of the inning after hitting the ball will get to advance to the earned base as a result of the given play then the ball is dead. Batter/runners will not advance through the remaining bases to home plate but will immediately vacate the field.
- 11.9 Season Format.** The first half of the season will be ball placed on Tee. The second half of the season will be coach pitch. 2nd half begins after Spring Break.
- 11.10 Pitching Distance.** Pitching distance will be what is comfortable for each team's players (10'-15'). Coaches should pitch from 1 or 2 knees or sitting on a bucket. Standing up to pitch a ball is not allowed.

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- 11.11 Number Of Pitches.** Batters will receive six (6) pitches. If the ball is not put in play after the sixth good pitch, a tee will be used. If the sixth pitch is fouled off, the batter may keep hitting until a swing and miss or ball hit into play.
- 11.12 Base-running (advancement).** All runners may advance a maximum of one base on an overthrown ball in the field of play regardless of additional overthrows.
- 11.13 Balls Hit Into Play.** Hits within the 10 foot arc from home plate are considered a foul ball. With a ball hit to the outfield, the batter has the option to advance to 2nd base (a double) but may not advance any further regardless of overthrows or distance of balls hit. No triples or home runs allowed. The ball is dead as soon as a defensive outfielder throws to the infield dirt.
- 11.14 Outfielders.** Outfielders must be at least 20' away from infield dirt.
- 11.15 Bunting.** Bunting is not allowed.
- 11.16 Sliding.** Sliding is not allowed.
- 11.17 Stealing.** Stealing is not allowed.
- 11.18 Baseballs.** The ball being used will be a softer RIF baseball.
- 11.19 Catchers.** Catchers making a play at home plate must not stand in the baseline or on home plate when making a tag. Managers/Coaches are not allowed to assist the Catcher with tagging runners but can move the catcher to a proper position to avoid a collision.
- 11.20 Awards.** Awards are presented to all Rookie players.

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INTER-LEAGUE RULES

- 12.1 Inter-League Rules.** In all divisions, if the SMLL Board of Directors decide to inter-league with another Little League, modifications to our local rules are permissible under the condition that all agreements are written, approved by the Board, and signed by each respective League President(s). The Division Rep will have the authority to represent SMLL in formulating the playing rules.

REGISTRATION

- 13.1 Eligibility.** All children ages 4 to 16 years old by August 31st of the current spring baseball season and who reside or attend school within our league's boundary map are eligible to register in Santa Margarita Little League. Boundary restrictions do not apply to children ages 4 to 7 or their older siblings if a waiver is completed and approved by the board of directors and local district.
- 13.2 Code of Conduct.** All parents, managers, coaches and board members must sign the Code of Conduct and Volunteer Application in order for their child(ren) to be eligible to play in Santa Margarita Little League. In addition, all individuals involved in any way or having any contact with children must consent to a background check.
- 13.3 Manager/Coach Approval.** All Managers and Coaches will be approved by the Board of Directors
- 13.4 Local Rules.** All Managers and Coaches will read, initial, and return a copy of the current SMLL Local Rules to their Division Rep prior to the first game of the season.
- 13.5 Manager Selection Committee.** The Managers Selection Committee will review all Manager Evaluations from the previous year prior to making manager recommendations to the President. The President will submit the Managers slate to the Board for approval.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

- 14.1 Elections.** The elections for Board of Directors will be conducted, per the SMLL Constitution.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF LOCAL RULES

I have read and understand the 2026 Santa Margarita Little League Local Rules.

Team Name: _____

Division: _____

Manager Name: _____

Manager Signature: _____

Coach 1 Name: _____

Coach 1 Signature: _____

Coach 2 Name: _____

Coach 2 Signature: _____

Date received by Division Rep: _____

Division Rep. Signature: _____