



LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL, INC
CALIFORNIA DISTRICT 33
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
CLAY BERRY, DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR



2026 TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

GENERAL RULES AND INFORMATION

TOURNAMENT PLAYING RULES: All 2026 regular season rules will be used for each division with noted exceptions.

PRE-GAME

Managers must provide the tournament site director a three-ring binder with all required documents 60 minutes before each game:

1. Original typed or legibly printed Eligibility Affidavit signed by the league president. Note: The manager and all coaches must have documented compliance with District 33 clinic requirements (i.e., skills and safety trainings).
2. An *original, wet-signed medical release* for each player on the team roster, matching the order listed in the eligibility affidavit. Medications/inhalers indicated as needed on medical releases must be unexpired and produced by the player. The player may not participate in pre-game warm-ups or in the game if these items are not available in the dugout.
3. A concussion and head injury information sheet signed by both the athlete and a parent/guardian.
4. An original pitch count record for all games starting Friday, May 22 (i.e., the week prior to the tournament) and any games played during the tournament.
5. Each adult must provide certified proof that they have passed these required training courses: concussion protocol, sudden cardiac arrest, abuse awareness, and Little League Diamond Leader. The certificates must be paper. See information at the end of this document.
6. Using plastic sleeves for the Eligibility Affidavit, medical releases, and concussion/head injury forms are required.
7. A copy of the current 2026 District 33 TOC Rules.
8. A copy of the 2026 Tournament Bracket for TOC of the division being played, available on the District 33 website).
9. The league's current safety plan for 2026.
10. A list of players with the phonetic spelling of each name for the announcer, available on District 33 website.
11. Only those listed on the affidavit are allowed on the field at any time. Temporary replacement of a manager or coach on a game-by-game basis is possible (for a justifiable reason) with prior approval from the Tournament Director.

PENALTY: failure to provide items 1–5 (above) within 10 minutes of game time *may* result in the forfeiture of that game.

BASEBALLS: Each team will provide the site director with three new game balls that meet Little League specifications and standards. Baseballs licensed by Little League will be printed with one of two designations: “RS” (for regular season play) or “RS-T” (for regular season and tournament play) and must bear the mark of “Little League Baseball”

[**Intermediate/Juniors/Seniors:** Senior League Baseball]. Baseballs will be returned—if available—following the game.

RULE 1.11 (PATCHES): Uniforms must have an official Little League patch on the left sleeve or front of the jersey (vest-style uniforms). Updated or previous Little League styles are allowed.

COIN FLIP: The manager or team representatives must be at the game site at least 45 minutes prior to game time. The site director will flip a coin in the presence of the managers (or their representatives) to determine the home and visiting team assignments.

Tournament line-up cards must be provided at coin flip; line-up cards must be turned in to gain access to the field. Players must be listed on the line-up card in this format: last name, first name or initial, defensive position and uniform number. Any rostered player who is not present at the game must be listed on the line-up card at the bottom.

DUGOUTS: The winner of the coin flip will choose Home or Visitor. The home team will have the first base dugout, and Visitors will have the third base dugout.

The Pledge of Allegiance or the National Anthem, the Little League Pledge, and the Parent Pledge must be recited or delivered prior to each game. Teams must stand on their base line during these opening ceremonies, immediately following the plate meeting with the umpires. Announcements regarding decorum during the game must be made prior to the start of the game (see the last page of TOC Rules).

SPECIAL TOC RULES

PLAYER REFRESHMENT: Only water and sports drinks will be permitted in the dugout during the game. Seeds, food or soda are not permitted in the dugouts. Gum, while not recommended, will be allowed in the Junior Division while players are in the dugout. Gum chewing is not allowed while on the field of play at all levels.

INELIGIBLE PLAYERS: Players *must* have been a member of that team at the conclusion of the regular playing season. Pool players are allowed for school trips or school activities that cause players to miss games. Players can be called up from lower divisions if they meet the age for that division.

Games may start and play games with eight (8) players on each team. When used, team(s) *will be* charged an out for the ninth (9th) position.

Penalty for use of ineligible players: Player(s) ruled to be ineligible will be removed from the tournament, and teams may be required to forfeit game(s). All officials—including opposing coaches and managers—must do everything in their power to prevent protests.

PROTEST PROCEDURE:

- 1) The protesting manager shall immediately, and before any succeeding play begins, notify the umpire that the game is being played under protest. Failure to protest before the next pitch, play, or attempted play will result in the protest being denied.
- 2) The game will be suspended until one of the following conditions are met: a) the protesting manager withdraws the protest, b) the ruling satisfies the protesting manager, or c) the District Tournament Protest Committee has issued a final ruling (see #4 below).
- 3) If not satisfied, the manager may require the protest be referred to the site director.
- 4) If not satisfied, the manager may require the protest be referred to the District Tournament Protest Committee. The ruling by the District Tournament Protest Committee will be final.

MANDATORY PLAY REQUIREMENTS (“MPR”): Managers must ensure that all players present at the beginning of the game play *six consecutive defensive outs*. Failure to meet MPR is not grounds for a protest. Players failing to meet MPR for any reason—including for games that are shortened for any reason—must start the next game and meet mandatory play for the previous game and that game. Managers failing to meet MPR—unless the game is shortened for any reason—will be suspended one game for the first offense and two for the second offense.

NOTE: If mandatory play is not met in the final game of the tournament, that game will be forfeited, unless game is shortened for any reason.

SUBSTITUTIONS: MANAGERS MUST REPORT ALL DEFENSIVE SUBSTITUTIONS TO DOCUMENT MPR. While the team is on defense, defensive changes must be reported to the plate umpire *and* scorekeeper for changes to pitcher and/or catcher for the entire game, and for *all* players until MPR has been met. Unreported subs may result in the player’s failure to meet MPR (see MPR, above).

MINORS 5-RUN RULE: A five-run rule must be used in Minors. The inning will end when the fifth run is scored, the third out is made, or the entire team bats once through the line up.

All runs driven in by a home run *hit over the fence* will count. The sixth inning and innings played under the Tied Game Rule will not have run limits, however batting once through the lineup still applies.

MERCY RULE: If after three (3) innings [**Intermediate/Juniors/Seniors:** four innings], two and one-half innings [**Intermediate/Juniors/Seniors:** three and one-half innings] if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of fifteen (15) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. If after four (4) innings [**Intermediate/Juniors/Seniors:** five innings], three and one-half innings [**Intermediate/Juniors/Seniors:** four and one-half innings] if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of ten (10) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent. If after five (5) innings [**Intermediate/Juniors/Seniors:** six innings], four and one-half innings [**Intermediate/Juniors/Seniors:** five and one-half innings], if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of eight (8) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent.

NOTE: (1) If the visiting team has a lead of fifteen (15), ten (10) or eight (8) runs or more respectively, the home team must bat in its half of the inning. A game determined by the Mercy Rule shall be considered a regulation game.

CONTINUOUS BATTING ORDER (“CBO”): CBO is required for all divisions (see rule 4.04).

RULE 6.02 (c): After entering the batter's box, the batter must remain in the box with at least one foot throughout the at bat.

RULE 6.05 (b)(2): Uncaught third strike will be enforced in the Major Division and above.

COURTESY RUNNER: A courtesy runner for the catcher and/or pitcher of record is allowed when there are two (2) outs. See rule 7.14(b).

TIME LIMITS:

Minors: No new inning will begin after two hours from the actual start of the game. Actual start time of the game will begin after the first pitch.

Majors: No time limits.

Intermediate/Juniors: No new inning will begin after two hours from the actual start of the game. Actual start time of the game will begin after the first pitch.

Notes: 1) There is no time limit for championship games (all divisions), 2) Games that are tied upon reaching the time limit must be played to determine a winning team. The Tied Game procedure must be used in the next complete inning after reaching the time limit.

TIED GAME: Upon completion of six innings [**Intermediate/Juniors/Seniors** seven innings] or if the score is tied upon reaching the time limit, the following tiebreaker will be used for the next inning:

Starting in the top of the seventh inning [**Intermediate/Juniors/Seniors** eighth Inning], and each half-inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last on second base. **Example**: If the number five batter is the lead-off batter, the number four batter in the batting order will be placed on second base. This will continue until either team scores more than their opponent, the tie is broken, and the game is complete. Championship games must be played to conclusion.

DRESS CODE: Managers and Coaches may not wear tank tops, or flip flops while on the field. Chino style or other appropriate shorts or pants are required; basketball and other athletic-style shorts are not allowed. A conventional baseball hat must be worn by managers and coaches during games; a visor is allowed for female managers and coaches. Only appropriate attire will be allowed.

PINS AND PENNANT: Tournament pins will be presented at the end of the first game. Pins may not be worn during the games. The TOC Pennant will be awarded to the championship team at the conclusion of the final game. The players will be invited to take a lap with the pennant after the presentation.

Regulation XIV- Field Decorum: The actions of players, managers, coaches, umpires and league officials must be above reproach. Any player, manager, coach, umpire or league representative who is involved in a verbal or physical altercation, or an incident of unsportsmanlike conduct, at the game site or any other Little League activity, is subject to disciplinary action by the Local League Board of Directors and/or by the district.

- 1) Anyone who has disciplinary action pending will not be allowed to play in until such disciplinary action is resolved.
- 2) Any player, manager or coach ejected from a game will be suspended for the next game. The district may dictate further suspension.

- 3) Players, coaches or teams may be removed from the tournament if the rules are not followed.

NOISE/MUSIC: Artificial noisemakers are *not* allowed. Walk-up music will be allowed but must stop once the batter reaches home plate. The volume level must be acceptable, and the music must be appropriate. Besides walk-up music, only the host league can use any type of PA system.

Required Certificates

The certificates for all the following trainings for each manager and coach *must* be in the team binder.

Concussion Protocol (Required Once). California law requires that all coaches and administrators must complete an online concussion training at least once before supervising youth athletes. The online Concussion Protocol Training is at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/>.

Abuse Awareness Protocol (Annually). This course, which serves as a replacement for the programs previously available through third-party organizations like USA Baseball, is custom to the Little League program. Required to be completed by all volunteers each year.

<https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/abuse-awareness-training-course/>

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Protocol (Required Once). AB379 requires the same protocols used for concussions in youth and high school sports to be used to help protect young athletes participating in school and community youth sports organizations from sudden cardiac arrest—the #1 killer of young athletes. The online Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Training is at: <https://epsavealife.org/sca-prevention-training/>

Diamond Leader Training Program (required once). All Managers and Coaches are required to complete the Little League Diamond Leader Training Program. This program focuses on ensuring children have a positive, well-rounded experience on and off the field by providing coaches with an understanding of the impact that mental, social, and emotional well-being has in youth sports through detailed information, interactive scenarios, and a variety of additional resources. Here is the link to the Diamond Leader training course: <https://www.littleleague.org/diamondleader/>.

TOC PROTEST COMMITTEE

TOURNAMENT SITE DIRECTORS: If a protest is not resolved to the protesting manager's satisfaction, please contact one of the following members of the Protest Committee in the order that they are listed. Please fill out the Protest Report before making the call.

District Admin

Clay Berry
619-787-7593

Umpire-in-Chief

Ric Castañon
(619) 847-7216

Staff Umpire

David Graham
619-322-9698