

Florida District 18 Little League®

BLUE FLAME Baseball-Softball

Tournament Playing Rules

OCTOBER, 2025
(Updated 10/01/2025)

1. Round Robin or Double Elimination Tournament for MINOR players will begin with each league in Florida Districts 9 and 18 allowed to enter one or more teams. Chartered leagues only, with each bracket/Pool will consist of no more than 20 teams. If a slot is not filled and another League wishes to enter a second team, they can be put in that open slot. If more teams are available than slots opened, the tournament director will draw and assign teams to those slots.

2. Entry fee will be \$250.00 per team and in order to establish the brackets, they must be received by announced deadline. **ON-LINE at www.flal8.com**

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3. The Tournament team draws and rules meeting will be held at an announced date. Each team must have a representative present at the meeting. Please bring name and telephone number of the manager for each team. We will use these names as contact persons for possible game changes.

4. A Tournament Committee will be appointed by the tournament director to help in the administration of the tournament. However, final authority rests with the Tournament director.

5. The primary function of the tournament committee is to select fields, establish brackets, pools and conduct rules and information meetings.

6. Fifteen (15) individual Championship RINGS will be awarded to the 1st place teams. In addition, each participant will receive a tournament pin

SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD will be awarded to the team that **BEST** describes **GOOD** sportsmanship following the tournament.

7. The Tournament Director will appoint an Official Game Director for each game played. The Tournament Director will be responsible to the District Administrator to insure that the games are conducted properly. In the case of a protest that cannot be resolved, the Tournament Director's decision will be final.

8. Teams to be made up of any **MINOR** division players. The team managers requested to supply **ROSTERS** before the team's first scheduled game. Direct all inquiries to the Tournament director.

9. The approved District 18 Little League Roster form must be presented to the Game Director at least 30 minutes prior to their first game. Only roster personnel can be in the dugout. No player can appear on more than one roster.

10. With the exception of how protests will be resolved, no deviation from the Official Little League Regulations and Regular Season Playing Rules and the special rules in this document will be allowed without the prior approval of the Tournament Director.

11. Should a protest situation arise, other than an illegal player, and the umpires and managers cannot resolve it, the game will be suspended and the protest turned over to the Official Tournament Director. The director may consult with anyone including contacting the District Administrator. The Director will rule on the protest and the Director's decision is final. No game will be replayed. If the protest involves an illegal player, the game will continue and the matter turned over to the Tournament Director for a ruling after the game is over.

(Note: Do not confuse ineligible with illegal. An illegal player is defined as a player not eligible, because of age or residence, to be on the roster and in the game.

12. Failure to comply with any of these rules will subject the team to disqualification.

13. Only the Tournament Director can disqualify a team.

14. District 18 Little League is responsible for furnishing volunteer umpires for games at their sites. It is the responsibility of the host league to furnish umpires with the tournament rules. The District 18 Umpire Consultant will assign neutral umpires for the final four games. The normal umpire crew will be two. However, a game can be played with one. Every effort will be made to use neutral umpires if they are available.

15. If a Pool Play format is used, the guidelines will be listed on the schedule.

16. **Game Changer** will be used for ALL games as directed by the tournament coordinator.

SPECIAL PLAYING RULES

1. With the following exceptions, all Little League playing rules and regulations are applicable.
2. No team will play more than two games per day (unless approved by the Tournament Director). The only exception is to complete games halted due to weather, curfew, or light failure.
3. The Tournament Director is the final authority. Only the Tournament Director can disqualify a manager, coach, player, or team.
4. All Game Directors must be approved by the Tournament Director. These Game Directors can appoint as many assistants as they need, but the Assistant Game Directors have no authority to rule on protests, etc. They should, however, do everything possible to help avoid protest situations including advising the umpires and managers on rules interpretations.
5. Team rosters will consist of a minimum of 10 players or maximum 15. A team can start and play a game with 10 players. However, a vacancy in the batting order by all players less than 10 will be skipped when that batting position comes up. If the team starts with less than 10 players, the vacancy will be in the last slot. If the vacancy occurs during the game, the slot created by the player/s who is/are unable to play will be skipped. If a team is unable to field nine players, the game will be forfeited. Every effort will be made to play the game.
6. The continuous batting order is mandatory for all games. When a player is injured, becomes ill, or must leave the game site after the start of the game, the team will skip over him/her when his/her time at bat comes up without penalty. If the injured, ill, or absent player returns he/she is merely inserted into their original spot in the batting order and the game continues. Also, if a player arrives late to a game site, if the manager chooses to enter him/her in the lineup (see Rule 4.01 NOTE 2), he/she would be added to the end of the current lineup. When a director permits teams to start and play games with eight (8) players, the tournament director will determine if an out is called for the ninth (9th) position in the batting line-up each turn at bat or if the team may skip over the ninth (9th) position without penalty. A.R. – For the purpose of continuous batting order, all players listed in the batting order shall be considered starters.
7. All members of a team must be in the same basic uniform and all players must have a visible number on their shirt. Blue jeans and colored T-shirts are an accepted uniform. When submitting starting lineups, the uniform numbers must be listed. No team personnel- bathing suits and tank tops are not allowed. While hats are not required, if headwear is worn, it must be a baseball style hat. Shoes are required, no sandals are allowed. League directors will not allow participants in a game (on field or dugout) that are not properly attired.
8. Teams can have up to 2 adults in the coaches boxes while on offense, but two of them must be the manager and two coaches or scorekeeper listed on the roster and only the manager can leave the dugout to talk to the umpire. If the manager is not at the game, one of the two coaches will be allowed to talk to the umpire. That coach will be identified prior to the start of the game. The only way another adult can be on the playing field is if they permanently replace a manager or a coach on the roster. (Note exception - Rule 9).

Once replaced, a manager or coach cannot be returned to the roster. The other adults must remain in the dugout at all times. Two adult base coaches (manager and/or coaches only) are allowed on the field while a team is at bat, but if either the manager or coach is not available, the coach will be a player. **There must be a rostered adult in the dugout at all times.** Adult coaches will **not** be permitted to switch coaching boxes during an inning.

Any violation of this rule is grounds for the immediate ejection of the coach(s) and/or team representative. In accordance with Little League rule 4.07, the person ejected will leave the field immediately and take no further part in that game. They may not sit in the stands.

9. If a manager or coach will be unable to attend a game for a justifiable reason, the Tournament Director and/or assistant Tournament Director could approve a temporary replacement. Replacements must be from the league's regular season teams. The league president must make request for approval to the district officer. Approval must be given and notification made to the Game Director prior to that game.

10. The starting line-ups must be presented to the Official scorekeeper and the opposing team at least 30 minutes before the game. Please be prompt. The Official scorekeeper will provide forms. You must include player's full name, uniform number and playing position.

11. The home team will be determined by a coin flip (double elimination only) by the league director and team representatives when both teams arrive. The home team will use the third base dugout and the visiting team will use the first base dugout. Pool play Home Teams will be determined on schedule. Home team will be scheduled to take infield first.

12. 10 players will be used on the field, including 4 outfielders and 6 infielders. The outfielders can be stationed anywhere in the outfield grass.

13. All players will play a minimum of three consecutive outs and bat once. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the game, unless shortened for any reason (mercy, rain, light failure, pitching machine failure.)

14. An inning shall be three outs or five runs. (This is in effect during each team's time at bat). As soon as the fifth run is scored, the inning is over. **If a team is behind by 10 runs or more in the fourth inning or beyond, the team behind may score only the amount of runs to take the deficit under the 10 run rule. (example: Bottom of 4th-Home team down 15-0, the team behind can only score a maximum of 6 runs)**

There will be no limit on the number of runs scored in the sixth inning or extra innings.

15. All games will have a one hour and thirty minutes time limit unless 6 innings have been played and there is a winner (no ties). Unless the game is tied, no inning will start after time expires but once an inning is started, it shall be played to completion unless either team is ahead by 10 or more runs, in which case the game will be terminated (NOTE: Games in which a lead has reached the point that the team behind cannot win, and the time limit has not been reached, the trailing manager may continue to play only until the time limit is reached). A new inning will start as soon as the home team has made the third out or the fifth run has crossed the plate. No inning Will start after 10 PM(if lights are available) If the previous game is not completed by 8:30 PM, the next game will not start and will be rescheduled.

16. The Game Director will appoint one official timekeeper for each game. The official time will start when the first pitch is delivered from the pitching machine. If, within the last 15 minutes of the official time, a player or coach requests time out for any reason, the Umpire-in-Chief will ask the opposing manager if he wants the clock stopped. If, at any time during the game, an injury time out exceeds 5 minutes or if play is held up to adjust the pitching machine, the Umpire-in-Chief will instruct the Timekeeper to stop the time. Otherwise, only the Game Director is authorized to stop the clock. If the time is stopped for any reason, it will be restarted when the next pitch is delivered from the machine. Every effort should be made to announce the remaining time every 15 minutes.

17. All games will be played with the infield fly rule.

18. Base stealing is not legal.

19. The Blue Flame will be used in the place of a pitcher. All the provisions of Regulation VI - Pitchers and Rule 9.00 - The Pitcher and any other references to the position of pitcher are superseded by the rules and regulations set forth in these Special Playing Rules.

20. The height of the machine must be such that the entire ball exits the machine at least three feet, but not more than four feet above home plate. No artificial material of any kind shall be placed under the leg(s) of the pitching machine.

21. The Game Director is responsible for setting the machine speed of the machine.

22. The pitcher's spot shall be marked with a pitching rubber or line. The 12 foot pitching circle will be treated the same as the pitching rubber in regular baseball for establishing when the ball is dead and the base runner(s) are required to return to their base.

If the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitchers circle, runners not in contact with their bases, must immediately attempt to advance or return to base.

PENALTY- THE BALL IS DEAD, THE RUNNER IS OUT.

23. The pitcher must hand the ball to the pitching machine feeder/umpire when play has ceased. The feeder is a person from the offensive team that feeds the pitching machine when a umpire is not available to work the game.(Do not throw to the feeder.) The feeder will be replaced by an assigned District 18 umpire during the semi-final, and Finals.

24. The pitcher may leave his pitcher's spot, (Either side) only after the ball has been ejected from the pitching machine and is in flight toward the batter. A violation will be ruled a delayed dead ball. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all base-runners advance at least one base on the action resulting from the batted ball, the violation will be ignored. Otherwise, the pitch will be considered a "no pitch" and a dead ball.

25. Bunting is allowed.

26. The catcher is allowed two practice catches upon entering the game and one between innings

27. Games will be played with a pitching machine placed at 45' 10 ½" feet (BASEBALL)
40'feet (SOFTBALL) from the back point of pitching machine to the back point of home plate.

A 12-foot radius circle (safety circle) will be drawn around the center of the pitching machine. This is the safety area around the pitching mound and machine, which pitcher must have 1 foot inside the circle (clay field). On the grass field pitcher may have 1 foot in the clay.

Machine Pitch setting: 3/3/5 or an agreed setting prior to the game.

Adult placement:

An adult coach/manager from the offensive team will pitch to the offensive team's batters by feeding balls into the pitching machine from within the safety circle. This coach CANNOT coach players on offense. Only to adjust their own batters position in the batters box for safety. For defense, no coaches will be allowed in the outfield.

28. The ball is considered dead when a batted ball strikes the machine before being touched by the pitcher or any defensive player. A ball that hits the machine or coach advances the batter to first and the runners currently on base only advance if forced.

29. If a game is called by the umpires i.e. (pitching machine failure and a replacement is not available, light failure or weather), a game shall be considered a regulation game if four innings have been completed or three and one-half innings if the home team is ahead. If a game is not yet regulation, it shall be handled per Little League rule 4.10(d).

30. There will be no "on-deck" batter. The next batter must stay inside the dugout area. REMINDER: The only batter swinging a bat should be that batter at the plate. For safety purposes, flagrant misconduct could result in game ejection.

31. No player or coach may leave the dugout or the coaching box while the ball is alive except to attend to an injured player.

32. Only three adults will be allowed in the dugout at any one time. At least one adult will be in the dugout at all times. Managers and coaches will not mingle with spectators in the stands and will only coach their players from the dugout. No coaching will be allowed from outside the fenced area.

33. In case of an injury, play will continue. The manager or one of the coaches will be allowed to go to the injured player. if in the judgment of the Umpire-in-Chief, he in any way interferes with the base runner, the Umpire-in-Chief can put the base runner(s) where he feels they would have been had there been no interference.

34. If a manager, coach or player is given a warning about their conduct on the field or in the dugout, the Umpire-in-Chief will notify the Game director, or his/her assistant on duty, about the warning. Any further misconduct will result in their removal from the field. However, in the case of a flagrant misconduct, no warning will be required. This rule also applies to batters intentionally throwing their bat in disgust while completing their time at bat and runners who remove their helmet while on the field. Runners who remove their helmet intentionally while in fair territory will receive one warning with a second occurrence resulting in ejection. The removal of the helmet away from play, such as returning to the dugout or in foul territory, will not result in a warning, but his manager of the helmet being worn into the dugout will immediately remind the player. In any case, flagrant misconduct can result in ejection without warning (i.e. throwing the helmet from the field to the dugout.)

35. Should a protest situation arise, other than an illegal player, and the umpires and managers cannot resolve it, the game will be suspended and the protest turned over to the Tournament Director. The Director may consult with anyone including contacting the District Administrator. The Director will rule on the protest and the Director's decision is final. No game will be replayed. This is a District 18 special games tournament, Warner Robins or Williamsport are NOT to be called.

36. For efficient use of time, please observe the following rules:

- a. Players should hustle on and off the field
- b. The catcher should keep shin guards on until entering the plate area.

37. Continuous Batting order will be used as per the LL Rule book.

38. The Official Little League rulebook will be used for all rules not covered in these guidelines.

39. Minors-

- a. No stealing at any time
- b. No runner may advance on passed balls
- c. Runners are limited to one base when being played upon i.e. (overthrows), whether or not it goes out of play.

Note: Runners can advance one base per overthrow. For example batter is entitled to second base only, on a overthrow to first base. He must remain on second base until a play is made either at another base or to the pitcher. If another overthrow is made prior to getting the ball in the pitching circle, all runners are entitled to another base. Runners, of course, advance at their own risk.