

Florida District 18 Little League® (Under 8 year Old) Baseball-Softball Tournament Playing Rules

APRIL 2026
(Updated 5/05/26)

1. Pool Play or Double Elimination Tournament for eight-year-olds and under, will begin with each league in Florida Districts 9,16,18 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 \$200.00 per team and to establish the brackets, they must be received by the 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 the name and telephone number of the manager for each team. We will use these names as contact people 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. Fourteen (14) individual Championship RINGS will be awarded to the 1st place teams. In addition, each participant will receive a tournament medallion or pin.

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 ensure 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. Tournament officials shall have the right to request a birth certificate for any player. The team managers requested to supply proof of age shall do so before the team's next scheduled game, and in no case shall this compliance time exceed 24 hours. Be prepared to verify birth dates. 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. Except for 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 will be 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. Host sites are 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.

Comment: If there is only one umpire, they will be stationed on the side of the batter (behind the hitter) and will determine if it is a NO pitch or a pitch that is in the strike zone. Also, rule on fair and foul and all outs and safes on the bases.

15. If a Pool Play format is used, the guidelines will be listed on the schedule. Championship segment games will NOT have a time limit.

16. Each team shall be responsible for supplying (1) NEW -Little League RS-T baseballs or approved 11" softball.

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 14. A team can start and play a game with 8 players only with tournament committee approval.
6. The continuous batting order is mandatory for all games. The continuous batting order will include all players on the team roster present for the game batting in order. Players will be required to bat in his/her respective spot in the batting order. However, a player may be entered and/or re-entered defensively in the game anytime provided he/she meets the requirements of mandatory play, which includes **3 consecutive defensive outs**.
NOTE 1: 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.
NOTE 2: When the tournament committee permits teams to start and play games with eight (8) players, the Tournament Committee 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 appointed to talk to the umpire for that game. 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 always remain in the dugout. 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 always a**

rostered adult in the dugout. 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 is 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-up 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 the 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 by a coin flip also. The home team will be scheduled to take the 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. Each team is responsible for supplying (1) baseball or softball (11") approved by the umpire.

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. 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 scorekeeper (GameChanger) for each game. The official time will start when the first pitch is delivered from the pitching machine.

17. All games will **NOT** be played with the infield fly rule. (NEW IN 2026)

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 Tournament Director is responsible for setting the machine speed of the machine.

No walks. If the machine throws 2 consecutive "NO PITCHES" the machine can be adjusted. The Umpire will determine if the pitch is a **STRIKE** or "NO PITCH" No walks. But, if the ball is in the strike zone, the strike will be called and count toward the 3 strikes to each batter.

Baseball -Machine Pitch setting: 3/3/7 Softball- Machine Pitch setting: 1/4/7

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 pitcher's 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 it to the feeder.) *The feeder will NOT be allowed to coach the base runners.*

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 baserunners 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 feet 10 ½ inches (BASEBALL) 40 feet (SOFTBALL) from the back point of pitching machine to the back point of home plate. It is acceptable to move the machine at any distance that is agreeable to the tournament director.

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.

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. For defense, no coaches will be allowed in the outfield.

28. The ball is considered dead when a batted ball strikes the machine/weights before being touched by the pitcher or any defensive player. A ball that hits the machine/weights 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. NO SITTING ON BUCKETS OUTSIDE THE DUGOUT.

32. Only four (Rostered) adults will be allowed in the dugout at any one time. At least one adult will always be in the dugout. 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. Nobody will be allowed to sit or stand outside their dugouts.

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 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. COURTESY RUNNER: A tournament team may permit a "courtesy runner" for the catcher of record when there are two (2) outs. Utilizing continuous batting order, the courtesy runner may be in the team's batting order and must be the player in the batting order who made the last out.

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

39. SPECIAL RULES

- 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 it goes out of play.
- d. *NOBODY SITTING ON BUCKETS IN LIVE BALL TERRITORY*

NOTE 1: Runners can advance one base per overthrow. For example, batter is entitled to second base only, on an 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.

NOTE 2: If the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle and is not making a play (a fake throw is considered a play), runners not in contact with their bases must immediately attempt to advance or return to base. **PENALTY:** The ball is dead. "No Pitch" is declared and the runner is out. A.R. – After making a decision, should the runner stop again without a play being made before reaching the base, he/she shall be called out. The responsibility for the runners to advance or return is removed if the pitcher attempts a play on a runner.

Halfway distance between bases for determination if runner is allowed the next base or not. Unless a runner(s) has made a full commitment to running to the next base, prior to the pitcher entering the pitching circle with possession of the ball, he/she will be required to return to the previous base. A full commitment is considered facing the next base and running full speed in that direction past the half way point in the judgement of the umpire. Side stepping, walking, or returning to a base is NOT considered a full commitment.

Comment: Once the pitcher has possession of the ball and is inside the circle, the runners cannot advance to the next base unless the runner is past the halfway mark. The umpire will have the final decision.
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