

Sonoma Little League

Bylaws & Local Rules

Sonoma Little League is a fully chartered Little League program open to boys and girls between the ages of 5-16 living within the boundaries of Sonoma Little League as determined by Little League Baseball. Our league plays in District 53 of the Western Region of Little League Baseball.

The following bylaws and local rules were reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors on **January __, 2023. November 2nd, 2021, with amendments made and approved on May 3, 2022.**

1. DIVISIONS OF PLAY-

Divisional alignment and number of teams will be adjusted based on enrollment.

- **Coach Pitch Division (Minors)** will be for players ages 9 and under. Only adult managers/coaches are permitted to pitch in the Coach Pitch Division. It is highly recommended, but not required, that players complete at least one year of Boys and Girls Club t-ball before playing Coach Pitch.
- **AA Division (Minors)** will be for players ages 7-10. A pitching machine will be utilized for one half of the season (the Board of Directors reserves the right to modify the use of the pitching machine at any point during the season).
- **AAA Division (Minors)** will be for players ages 7-11.
- **Majors Division (Majors)** will be for players ages 9-12. (One year of AAA experience required)
- **JR/SR Division** will be for players ages 12,13 and 14.

Single A (Coach Pitch)- Ages 5-7

Players who are league age 5-7 are eligible to play in the Single A Coach Pitch Division. Coach Pitch is our most developmental division designed to teach players basic skills of the game, such as: hitting, running to the bases, and throwing. The most important aspect is that the players have fun and hopefully develop a love for the game. Coaches will pitch approximately 6 balls to the players then if needed players will hit from a tee during games. Scores and outs are not kept in this division, teams bat through the order and play 2 to 3 innings per game. We try to build self-confidence in a non-competitive environment for the players hoping to develop a love for the game. Only adult managers/coaches are permitted to pitch in this division. Teams are selected by the Player Agents. This division falls under Little League Baseball Rules for Tee Ball.

AA- Machine/Player Pitch- Ages 6-9

Players who are league age 6-9 are eligible to play the Double AA Minors Division. League age 6 year olds must have played one year of Single A (Coach Pitch) and be assessed by the league as capable of participation before playing in the AA division. This division of minors remains highly instructional and introduces players to specific positions and game scenarios. Strikes, Balls and Outs are recorded but no score is kept. A Mechanical pitching machine is used for the first 2-3 innings of each game and then player pitching may be

utilized. Players will take part in evaluations to ensure they are in the proper division for their skill level. Teams are selected by managers in a draft under the supervision of the Player Agents and President.

AAA- Player Pitch- Ages 8-11

Players who are league age 8-11 are eligible to be selected to the Triple AAA Minors Division. This division of minors is still instructional but introduces the elements of competition. Players pitch every inning at this level, scores are recorded and the season ends with every team participating in a double-elimination tournament. All 11-year olds are required to participate in AAA if not drafted to a majors team. Player tryout/ evaluations will take place before the start of the season to ensure players are in the proper division for their skill level. Teams are selected by managers every year in a draft under the supervision of the Player Agents and President. League age 7 year olds may request an evaluation to play AAA. Players league age 7-10 that are not selected for a AAA Team during the draft will be placed in the AA division. All returning AAA players not moved to majors will be selected for a AAA Team.

Majors- Ages 10-12

Players who are league age 10-12 are eligible to be selected to the Majors Division. This is our most competitive division of play. All 12-year olds must participate in the Majors division. Players are drafted by managers each year and become “property players” for that team until they age out of the Majors division. Players League Age 10-11 that are not selected to a Majors team through our draft process will automatically be placed in our AAA Minors Division (does not apply to returning Major players). Some travel for inter-district play is required for the Majors Division. League age 9 year olds may request an evaluation and Board of Director approval to play Majors.

Juniors- Ages 13-14

Players who are league age 13-14 are eligible to play in the Junior Division. This is a competitive division of play using a conventional 90-foot diamond with a pitching distance of 60 feet, 6 inches. Travel is required for interdistrict play. Teams are selected by managers every year in a draft under the supervision of the Player Agents and President.

The Board of Directors may evaluate players on a case-by-case basis to place individuals in divisions that more accurately represent their skill level, regardless of age. However, the placement of any player MUST remain consistent with Little League Rules and Regulations.

2. DRAFT METHOD

The Draft Method for all divisions (except Majors) will be the same as the “Plan A - Method for Existing Leagues”, as described in the Little League Operating Manual.

- **Majors Division Only-** The Little League Baseball Draft Plan A, conventional draft is used by Sonoma Little League. Below includes specifics to our league used with ‘Plan A’.

The draft order is determined by the final placement of teams from the previous season based on overall record/winning percentage. (Exception: The first-place team is always determined by the outcome of the playoffs, regardless of record, and that team will always pick last in each round of the next year’s draft). If two or more teams are tied, it will be broken by the results of the head-to-head games between the teams involved. If still tied,

the tie will be broken by calculating the runs allowed per inning played on defense in all games played by the teams. The team having the lowest ratio receives the higher placement. Every effort will be made to play all games scheduled. However, it may be necessary to use winning percentage to determine placement, even if there is an uneven number of games played.

Property players from the prior season will be placed on the draft board starting in round 2 until all returning property players are placed back on their team from the prior season. Each round except 1 and 7 will be assigned a player age which must be selected in that round. If no one in that age category is available managers may select up 1 year then down 1 year. The player ages eligible for majors each season shall be determined by the President and Player Agents after the tryouts and before the draft. The Draft Board shall be approved by the Board of Directors via email prior to the draft. The Official Draft Board will be shared with all Majors Managers via email within 24 hours of the draft meeting.

Practice field selection will be based on reverse draft order. Every effort will be made for practice field selection to take place immediately following the draft.

- **Juniors, AAA/AA Divisions-** Draft order is determined by a blind draw prior to the draft. A snake method of drafting will be used in these divisions. The Team Manager and 1 predetermined coach shall have their players placed in rounds 1 and 2 before the draft begins. For AA division Coach or player requests will be taken by player agents but are not guaranteed. We shall accept requests of players to the same team for carpool reasons. Practice field and Team Name selection will be based on reverse draft order. Every effort will be made for practice field selection to take place immediately following the draft. Returning coaches will have the first option to the same team name. If a different name is desired it will be based on the reverse draft order .
- **Coach Pitch Only-** The Player Agents are responsible for player placement, with final approval from the League President. Managers may request up to 4 players on their team; all other players will be placed by the Player Agents to make the most even teams based on age and experience. Team names will be selected by coaches, order will be pulled from a hat. Practice field selection will be the reverse order of team name selection.. Every effort will be made for practice field selection to take place immediately following the draft. Returning coaches will have first option to the same team name. If a different name is desired they will be placed in the hat draw.

Draft selections are confidential; at no point should anyone involved discuss when players were selected or not selected in the process. Anyone suspected of breaking confidentiality will be subject to disciplinary action by the Board of Directors.

3. ALL-STAR SELECTION PROCESS

Little League allows each local league to determine the method used to select All Start teams.

Little League does however recommend the following process:

The following plan was presented to the International Congress. Washington D.C. 1965 as a guideline, taken from the experience of the International Advisory Council. The principle is to have all components of a league determine and participate in fair and democratic selection of the tournament team. This would eliminate many of the complaints, abuses, pressures and charges of favoritism, which are directed toward the league president . The following groups should each select its tournament team.

- Group 1 - Players
- Group 2 - League Officers
- Group 3 - Team Managers
- Group 4 - Team Coaches
- Group 5 - Volunteer Umpires

Every player on the eligible teams is entitled to vote. Each group submits its list of players at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the league. The names are to be read and counted from each of the groups and the players in the order of total votes received will become eligible for the tournament team. Where more than one player has an equal number of votes to qualify for the last position or positions, final selection should be made by a majority vote of the board of Directors at the time of the meeting.

Sonoma Little League has adopted this recommended method for selection of its All-Star teams. The details of the process used by Sonoma Little League are provided below.

All-Star Manager Selection - A Major Division Manager or Coach is eligible to manage an All-Star team if he/she has adequately fulfilled all Manager responsibilities during the regular season and is approved by the President. All candidates must submit a request in writing stating an intent to manage an All-Star team by the date set forth by the Board. Any/All Manager/Coaches must be in good standing with the League in order to manage or coach an All Star Team. If multiple Managers intend to manage an age group, the All-Star Manager will be selected by ballot. Eligible voters will include each rostered Major Division Manager and rostered Major Division Coaches. In the event each managerial candidate receives the same number of votes, the League President, in consultation with the Board, will make the final decision on All-Star Manager Selection.

- 8/9/10 and 9/10/11 Division Manager and Coaches- The manager and coach(es) shall be regular season team managers and/or coaches from the AAA or Majors Division.
- 10/11/12 Division Manager and Coaches- The manager and coach(es) shall be regular season team managers and/or coaches from the Majors Division.
- Junior Division Manager and Coaches- The manager and coach(es) shall be regular season team managers and/or coaches from the Junior Division.

Each All Star Manager will select his/her rostered coaches within 48 hours of being selected as an All Star Manager. No manager or coach may be selected for more than one All Star Team.

Player Eligibility- A Major or AAA player is eligible to be placed on an All-Star Team if he/she meets the Little League age, residency, and participation requirements.

- **Age:** A player must be prepared to supply an approved proof of age document as required by Little League.
- **Residency:** A player must live within the Sonoma **Valley** Little League boundaries and be prepared to supply the Little League required proof of residency documents.. Players living outside of the boundaries must have had a Little League II (d) or IV (h) for filed during the season.
- **Participation:** A player must have participated in more than one-half the regular season games **and be on a major league roster at season's end.**

Ballot - The goal of this election **and selection** is to build teams that will be competitive in our District's All-Star tournament and will proudly represent Sonoma Little League.

- **On the ballots for the Players eligible for the 10/11/12-year old All-Star team** will be Major Division players with a Little League age of 10, 11, or 12.
- **On the ballot for the Players eligible for the 9/10/11-year old All-Star team** will be Major and AAA Division players with a Little League age of 9, 10, or 11.
- **On the ballot for the Players eligible for the 8/9/10-year old All-Star team** will be Major and AA Division players with a Little League age of 8, 9, or 10.

Eligible Voters - No person may vote more than once, even if that person falls into more than one of the following categories.

- **Players** - Any player on a Major Division team roster at the time of the voting is eligible to cast a ballot.
- **Managers** - The managers of the Major Division teams at the time of the voting are eligible to cast a ballot.
- **Coaches** - The rostered coaches of the Major Division teams at the time of the voting are eligible to cast a ballot.
- **Board Members** - Voting members of the elected Board of Directors at the time of the All-Star balloting are eligible to cast a ballot.

Voting and Selection - The President **and**, Player Agents, **and one other Board approved appointee** shall be responsible for managing the balloting and vote-tallying and **manager meeting process.**

- Each voter will complete three ballots, one for each age group described above.
- On each ballot, the voter will select 9 players to represent Sonoma Little League on that All-Star team. The league president has the right to discard any ballots that he/she believes were completed without following the ballot instructions. By way of example, a ballot that contains more than 9 selections or less than 9 selections will automatically be discarded. All discarded ballots must be presented to the Board of Directors.
- Votes will be tallied from each group of voters and the grand total of votes obtained by each player will be calculated. These results will be presented to the Board of Directors. The nine eligible and available players getting the most votes will be assigned to the All-Star team.

Process for Voting and Selection of the Junior All Star Team:

- The first 9 Players selected to the All Star Team will be based on a vote of all players in the Junior Division. On the ballot for the players vote will be all players in the Junior Division. Each Junior player will receive a ballot and they will select 9 players that they believe should be on the All Star Team. Ballots will be counted and tallied by the Player Agents and President.
 - Any ballot containing more or less than 9 players will be thrown out.
- The next 3 players will be selected at a meeting of ALL Junior Managers. Eligible players will include all players in the Junior Division. If a manager is unable to attend they may send a rostered coach in their place. It is expected that managers will confer with their rostered coaches prior to the meeting in order to get their input. If the managers cannot come to a consensus of the players in a reasonable amount of time (approx. a half hour) a vote will take place. If a vote is needed each Managers will vote for the 3 players they believe should be placed on the All Star Team.
 - Where more than one player has an equal number of votes to qualify for the last position or positions, final selection will be made by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Each board member will fill out a Ballot, listing players from the list of players tying for the last spots. Each ballot cast must list enough players to complete the All-Star roster. Incomplete ballots will be discarded. The top vote getters, along as they receive a majority vote from the Board of Directors, will be added to the All-Star roster. **If the All-Star roster does not contain 9 players at this point then the Board votes again using the same process to fill the remaining open positions.**
- The final 1 to 3 players will be selected by the All Star Team Manager.

Process for Voting and Selection of the 10/11/12 Year Old All Star Team:

- The first 6 Players selected to the All Star Team will be based on a vote by all players in the Majors Division. On the ballot for the players vote will be only the 12 year olds in the Majors Division. Each Majors player will receive a ballot and they will select 6, 12 year old players that they believe should be on the All Star Team. Players may not vote for players on their own team. Ballots will be counted and tallied by the Player Agents and President.
 - Any ballot containing more or less than 6 players will be thrown out.
- The next 5 players will be selected at a meeting of ALL Majors Managers. Eligible players will include ALL 10, 11 and 12 year olds in the Majors Division. If a manager is unable to attend they may send a rostered coach in their place. It is expected that managers will confer with their rostered coaches prior to the meeting in order to get their input. If the managers cannot come to a consensus of the 5 players in a reasonable amount of time (approx. a half hour) a vote will take place. If a vote is needed each Managers will vote for the 5 players they believe should be placed on the All Star Team.
 - Where more than one player has an equal number of votes to qualify for the last position or positions, final selection will be made by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Each board member will fill out a Ballot, listing players from the list of players tying for the last spots. Each ballot cast must list enough players to complete the All-Star roster. Incomplete ballots will be discarded. The top vote getters, along as they receive a majority vote from the Board of Directors, will be added to the

All-Star roster. If the All-Star roster does not contain 9 players at this point then the Board votes again using the same process to fill the remaining open positions.

- The final 1 to 3 players will be selected by the All Star Team Manager. The All Star Team Manager may select any player with a league age of 10, 11 or 12 in the Majors Division.

Process for Voting and Selection of the 8/9/10 and 9/10/11 Year Old All Star Teams:

- The first 11 players will be selected at a meeting of ALL Majors and AAA Managers. Eligible players will include ALL players that fit the age category who played in either the Majors or AAA Division. If a manager is unable to attend they may send a rostered coach in their place. It is expected that managers will confer with their rostered coaches prior to the meeting in order to get their input. If the managers cannot come to a consensus of the 10 players in a reasonable amount of time (approx. 45 minutes) a vote will take place. If a vote is needed each Managers will vote for the 10 players they believe should be placed on the All Star Team.
 - Where more than one player has an equal number of votes to qualify for the last position or positions, final selection will be made by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Each board member will fill out a Ballot, listing players from the list of players tying for the last spots. Each ballot cast must list enough players to complete the All-Star roster. Incomplete ballots will be discarded. The top vote getters, along as they receive a majority vote from the Board of Directors, will be added to the All-Star roster. If the All-Star roster does not contain 9 players at this point then the Board votes again using the same process to fill the remaining open positions.
- The final 1 to 3 players will be selected by the All Star Team Manager. The All Star Team Manager may select any player that fits the age category who played in either the Majors or AAA Division.

All Star selections are confidential; at no point should anyone involved discuss when players were selected or not selected in the process. Anyone suspected of breaking confidentiality will be subject to disciplinary action by the Board of Directors.

All players selected will have their names posted on the Sonoma Little League website and Social Media and will be notified by their All Star Manager in accordance with the dates set forth by Little League International.

All ballots shall be shredded immediately after official counts take place. Player ballots will be stored in a sealed envelope with the manager's signature across the tape until the official count takes place. Player Agents will be responsible for holding ballots at all times.

Replacements - Players voted to an All-Star team must be able to attend All-Star practices starting as early as May 15th June 15th and must be available to play in the All-Star games (generally beginning and during the end of June or beginning of July). If a player cannot devote the necessary time due to injury, scheduled vacation or other commitments, that player will be replaced on the All-Star team. The manager for the team, in conjunction with the league

President and Player Agents will make that determination. No alternates will be chosen in advance of the need to fill a roster spot.

Manager Selections/ Extra Roster Positions - Managers are allowed a minimum of three (3) “manager selections” to complete the All-Star roster. If an All-Star manager decides to carry more than 12 players on his/her team then he/she may choose any player who was on the ballot for that specific team or a Majors eligible Minors player and who is eligible according to Little League rules. If there are too few Major Division players to fill one of the All-Star rosters then all eligible players are placed on the All-Star team and the All-Star team manager may fill his/her roster by choosing other eligible players in the league. See the player eligibility section of the “Tournament Rules and Guidelines” for Minor player eligibility requirements in the 9-10 and 10-11 tournament divisions.

4. IN SEASON PLAYER REPLACEMENT POLICY-

The following local rules are established as a supplement to Little League Regulation III (d):

- If any player misses (2) consecutive games, or that player is consistently absent from practices, the manager must notify the Player Agents immediately. Failure by the manager to immediately report consistent absences at games or practices will result in disciplinary action by the Board of Directors.
- Managers should do their best to communicate with the players parents/ guardian about absences and any concerns before reaching out to the Player Agents.
- If continued absences are expected for reasons other than illness or injury, that player **will** **may** be removed from the team by action of the Player Agents and with the approval of the Board.
- Under no circumstances should the manager take action to remove a player without consulting the Player Agents first. The Player Agents, **whenever possible, shall try to will** contact the player and his/her parents to determine the reason(s) for the continued absences and/or the player’s decision to stop participating.
- If a replacement player is needed the Player Agents shall first determine if there are any eligible players on a waiting list. If there are no waiting list players at the time a replacement is needed then the Player Agents will gather a list of eligible minors players that may be selected to move up to the majors.
 - Replacement players must be the same age as the player that was removed from the Majors team. If no player of the same age is eligible then a player 1 year older may be selected if none exist a player 1 year younger may be selected.
 - Every effort must be made by the Player Agents and Board of Directors to ensure the replacement player move is not disruptive to the minors division nor does it give any draft benefit to the majors team for the next year.
 - All replacements must be approved by the Board of Directors.
- If a Minor Division player declines to move up to a Major Division team, that player will forfeit their eligibility to the Major Division for the remainder of the season. **This includes any player that refuses to move up to the Major Division at the beginning of the season whether at registration, try-outs, or any other time prior to the first scheduled game.**

NOTE: The replacement of players from the Minor Division into the Major Division during the last two weeks of the regular season schedule is prohibited.

5. FIVE-RUN/LAST INNING

The following rule shall apply to Minor AAA division games only (Minor AA games will be played with the five-run rule in every inning, no exceptions):

- A five-run limit will be imposed in every inning but the last inning. The last inning will be the defined as follows:
- The first new inning that starts after the 1 HOUR and 40 MINUTE mark and before the 2 HOUR mark will be determined the last inning.
- This last inning will end when a team bats through the roster, obtains three outs or the home team takes the lead (no five-run rule). If this inning only takes 10 minutes it is still considered the last inning regardless of the score or any remaining time left within the two-hour time limit. Games ending in ties will be considered regulation games and will not be continued.
- If a new inning begins before the 1 HOUR and 40 MINUTE mark it will be played under the five-run rule. If that inning takes 40 minutes (which puts it past the two-hour time limit) the game is over and neither team will benefit from the "last inning" rule, regardless of the score.
- It is critical that the games start on time and the official scorekeeper documents the time of the first pitch. The umpire will be responsible for monitoring the game clock and inform both teams when the "last inning" is in effect.

6. PLAY-OFF STRUCTURE / DISTRICT TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS-

MAJORS DIVISION - All teams will participate in a double elimination tournament following the completion of the regular season. Seeding for this tournament will be based on regular season record. Two teams will represent Sonoma Little League in the District Tournament of Champions. The first team will be the team with the best record from the regular season (Regular Season Champion) and the second team will be the team that wins the postseason tournament (Postseason Champion). In the event that the Regular Season Champion and the Postseason Champion are the same team, the runner-up in the postseason tournament will be the second team to represent the league in the Tournament of Champions.

Majors and AAA DIVISION - All teams will participate in a double elimination tournament following the completion of the regular season. Seeding for this tournament will be based on regular season record. Ties will be broken by the results of head-to-head games between the teams. If still tied, it will be broken by calculating the runs allowed per innings played on defense in all games played by the teams. The team having the lowest ratio wins the tiebreaker.

If two teams will represent Sonoma Little League in the District Tournament of Champions. **Team One** The first team will be the team with the best record from the regular season (Regular Season Champion) and **the second team Team Two** will be the team that wins the postseason tournament (Postseason Champion). In the event that the Regular Season Champion and the Postseason Champion are the same team, the runner-up in the postseason tournament will be the second team to represent the league in the Tournament of Champions.

If one team will represent Sonoma Little League in the District Tournament of Champions, the team selected shall be the Postseason Champion.

7. PLAYER POOL GUIDELINES

The league's Player Agents will create and run the player pool. The league's Player Agents will use the pool to assign players, on a rotating basis, to teams that are short of players for any particular game(s).

- Managers and/or coaches will not have the right to randomly pick and choose players from the pool.
- Pool play must not conflict with players' regular team games.
- When a player participates in a game on a team other than his/her own team, such player will not be permitted to pitch or catch in that game.
- Pool players that are called and show up at the game site must play at least nine consecutive defensive outs and bat once.
- The player pool can only be used in the Majors Division and only during regular season games.
- A separate player pool shall be used for Majors and AAA.
- Pool players may only be used during the regular season.
- Managers may only request a pool player if they are certain to have nine or fewer regular team players. The manager may request as many pool players as necessary to field a team of ten (10). By way of example:
 - Team "A" only has nine (9) players - the manager may request one (1) pool player.
 - Team "A" only has eight (8) players - the manager may request two (2) pool players.
 - Team "A" only has seven (7) players - the manager may request three (3) pool players.
- The manager **must should** provide the Player Agents with at least 24 hours notice in the event a pool player(s) is needed.
- If a manager becomes aware of being short players at the last minute they should contact the "officer of the day" ASAP.
- Under no circumstances shall a manager, coach, or player approach a prospective pool player to enquire about their availability to play for another team.
- Players electing to participate in pool play shall never be subject to approval by their team nor shall they be punished for pool playing. Any manager suspected of this behavior will be subject to discipline by the Board of Directors.

Procedure for assigning Pool Players:

- Players will complete a "Pool Player **Application Interest**" at the beginning of the season. Players will be added to the pool in the order their **applications interest** are received.
- As the Player Agents are notified of a shortage of players for an upcoming game, the pool players will be contacted by the Player Agents on a rotating basis.
- If a pool player is asked to participate in a game and is unable to do so on that date, that player will be bypassed and the next available pool player will be invited to participate.
- If Player Agents are unable to make contact with a pool player after multiple attempts they will move to the next pool player on the list.