

Expanded Softball Special Games - 2010

In response to the overwhelming requests for an easier approach to organize softball Special Game tournaments, Little League International announced the Expanded Softball Special Games Guide in 2009. After its inaugural year, Little League conducted a survey to gauge its effectiveness and will continue to offer this initiative to its Softball program with a few enhancements in 2010.

This inclusive guide provides modified softball playing rules to attract Little League players, coaches and parents to our tournament setting. These regulations also will serve as a platform for possible future softball rule revisions, without compromising Little League's core standards.

Specific adjustments to Expanded Softball Special Games have been made in game scheduling, participation, pitching rules, and team composition – designed to increase the competition level. Softball Special Game Directors are given the option to implement additional rule variations at the Major Division age group regarding stealing and dropped third strikes. Some or all of this Expanded Softball Special Games participation also will calculate into softball players' tournament eligibility, but only for divisions above the Majors Division.

The procedures are divided into four main categories: Minor, Major, Junior/Senior and Big League. Age and physical development were considered when constructing the divisions and expanding the Expanded Softball Special Games regulations. Little League approved brackets are available online at http://www.littleleague.org/Assets/forms_pubs/Brackets_LLB.pdf.

Little League is hopeful that these adjustments will entice softball teams and encourage leagues to coordinate more opportunities.

Except where noted in the Expanded Softball Special Games Kit, the Little League Softball Official Regulations and Playing Rules will be used in the conduct of the Minor League Softball Expanded Special Games, Major League Softball Expanded Special Games, Junior League Softball Expanded Special Games, Senior League Softball Expanded Special Games and Big League Softball Expanded Special Games.

Failure to administer the Expanded Softball Special Games guidelines as outlined is subject to review and sanction of charter or tournament privileges by the Charter/Tournament Committee in Williamsport.

Additionally, leagues and districts must complete the proper Special Games Request Form as set forth by Regulation IX. Special Game Forms are available at http://www.littleleague.org/Assets/forms_pubs/App_SpecialGames.pdf or http://www.littleleague.org/Assets/forms_pubs/App_SpecialGames_nonll.pdf.

Softball Special Games Kit

Minor Division Softball

The following rules are based on a two- or three-day Expanded Softball Special Games tournament. Expanded Softball Special Games under these guidelines must be approved by the regional office as set forth by Regulation IX.

- Each Minor Division in a league is limited to three Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended pitching rules prior to the league's first Tournament game within the Minor Division. Any one player may only participate in a maximum of two Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended pitching rules prior to the league's first Tournament game within the Minor Division.
- Teams participating in these Expanded Softball Special Games during the regular season shall be composed of players from no more than two regular season teams from the Minor Division within the league or interleague.
- In accordance with Little League Regulation XI, no admission fee may be charged to any Minor Division Expanded Softball Special Game. Voluntary contributions are permitted.
- Doubleheaders may be played on Saturday and Sunday without affecting the teams' Regular Season play, other than the pitching guidelines noted below.
- Minor Division teams may not play more than two games in a day.
- Tournament Directors have the option to impose a time limit on games, if necessary because of the number of teams participating, limited playing space, etc.
- A player may pitch a maximum of nine innings during the Special Games tournament. This will not affect a player's regular season pitching status for the previous or following week, **provided they have a day of rest before and after pitching in the tournament.**
- If a player pitches less than seven innings in any day, no rest is required. If a player pitches seven or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest must be observed. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched an inning.
- Mandatory Play - Every player on the Expanded Softball Special Games roster present at the start of the game shall participate in each game for a minimum of three consecutive defensive outs and bat at least one time. There is no exception to this rule unless the game is shortened for any reason other than a time limit that has been established by the Tournament Director prior to the start of the tournament.
- Only regular season managers and coaches from the one or both teams are allowed.

Major Division Softball

The following rules are based on a two- or three-day Expanded Softball Special Games tournament. Expanded Softball Special Games under these guidelines must be approved by the regional office as set forth by Regulation IX.

- Each Major Division in a league is limited to three Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended pitching rules prior to the league's first Tournament game within the Major Division. Any one player may only participate in a maximum of two Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended pitching rules prior to the league's first Tournament game within the Major Division.
- Teams participating in these Expanded Softball Special Games during the regular season shall be composed of players from no more than two regular season teams from the Major Division within the league or interleague.
- In accordance with Little League Regulation XI, no admission fee may be charged to any Little League (Major) Division Game. Voluntary contributions are permitted.
- Doubleheaders may be played on Saturday and Sunday without affecting the teams' Regular Season play, other than the pitching guidelines noted below.
- Major Division teams may not play more than three games in a day.
- Tournament Directors have the option to impose a time limit on games, if necessary because of the number of teams participating, limited playing space, etc.
- Tournament Directors have the option to implement the following playing rules:
 - Dropped Third Strike – The batter becomes a runner when the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are less than two outs and first base is unoccupied, or anytime there are two outs.
 - Leaving the Base on Pitcher's Release – Runners may leave their entitled base after the pitcher has released the ball.
- A player may pitch a maximum of 20 innings in the tournament but may not pitch more than 12 innings in a day. This will not affect a player's regular season pitching status for the previous or following week, **provided they have a day of rest before and after pitching in the tournament.**
- Major Division: If a player pitches less than 10 innings in any day, no rest is required. If a player pitches 10 or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest must be observed. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched an inning.
- Mandatory Play - Every player on the Expanded Softball Special Games roster present at the start of the game shall participate in each game for a minimum of three consecutive defensive outs and bat at least one time. There is no exception to this rule unless the game is shortened for any reason other than a time limit that has been established by the Tournament Director prior to the start of the tournament.
- Only regular season managers and coaches from the one or both teams are allowed.

Junior/Senior League Softball

The following rules are based on a two- or three-day Expanded Softball Special Games tournament. Expanded Softball Special Games under these rules must be approved by the regional office as set forth by Regulation IX.

- Each Junior/Senior Division in a league is limited to three Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended pitching rules prior to the league's first Tournament game. Any one player may only participate in a maximum of two Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended pitching rules prior to the league's first Tournament game.
- Leagues or leagues combined through interleague play may submit teams to participate in these Expanded Softball Special Games. Teams must be composed of regular season players within the Junior or Senior programs in their respective division.
- In accordance with Little League Regulation XI, an admission charge is permitted.
- Teams may not play more than three games in a day.
- Tournament Directors have the option to impose a time limit on games if necessary due to the number of teams participating, limited playing space, etc.
- Tournament Directors have the option to implement the following playing rules:
 - Courtesy Runner – Any player not currently in the batting order may replace the current pitcher or catcher as a courtesy runner at any time after they safely reach base. The pitcher or catcher may remain in the game and the courtesy runner will retain all substitution rights (if the courtesy runner has substitution rights). The same player may not be used as a courtesy runner for both the pitcher and the catcher positions.
 - Pitching Distance (Senior Division only) – The distance between the front side of the pitcher's plate and the rear point of home plate may be 43 feet.
- A player may pitch a maximum of 30 innings during the Expanded Softball Special Games tournament but may not pitch in more than 14 innings in a day. This will not affect a player's regular season pitching status of the previous or following week, **provided they have a day of rest before and after pitching in the tournament.**
- If a pitcher pitches less than 12 innings in any day, no rest is required. If a player pitches 12 or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest must be observed. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched an inning.
- Mandatory Play – Junior Division: Every player on a Special Games roster present at the start of the game shall participate in each game for a minimum of three consecutive defensive outs and bat at least one time. There is no exception to this rule unless the game is shortened for any reason other than a time limit that has been established by the Tournament Director prior to the start of the tournament. (**NOTE** – Senior Division: Mandatory Play does not apply.)
- Only regular season managers and coaches from within the respective divisions are eligible to coach.
- A player may count participation in one Expanded Softball Special Games tournament participation toward their 60 percent participation requirement for Tournament eligibility.

Big League Softball

The following rules are based on a two- or three-day Expanded Softball Special Games tournament. Expanded Softball Special Games under these rules must be approved by the regional office as set forth by Regulation IX.

- Each Big League is limited to three Expanded Softball Special Games tournaments under these amended pitching rules prior to the league's first Big League Tournament game.
- Leagues or leagues combined through inter-league play may submit teams to participate in these Expanded Softball Special Games. Teams must be composed of regular season players from within the Big League programs.
- In accordance with Little League Regulation XI, an admission charge is permitted.
- Teams may not play more than three games in a day.
- Tournament Directors have the option to impose a time limit on games if necessary due to the number of teams participating, limited playing space, etc.
- Tournament Directors have the option to implement the following playing rules:
 - Courtesy Runner – Any player not currently in the batting order may replace the current pitcher or catcher as a courtesy runner at any time after they safely reach base. The pitcher or catcher may remain in the game and the courtesy runner will retain all substitution rights (if the courtesy runner has substitution rights). The same player may not be used as a courtesy runner for both the pitcher and the catcher positions. The courtesy runner is not permitted to be used if there is a designated hitter being used for the pitcher or catcher.
 - Pitching Distance – The distance between the front side of the pitcher's plate and the rear point of home plate may be 43 feet.
- A player may pitch a maximum of 30 innings during the Expanded Softball Special Games tournament but may not pitch in more than 14 innings in a day. This will not affect a player's regular season pitching status of the previous or following week, **provided they have a day of rest before and after pitching in the tournament.**
- If a pitcher pitches less than 12 innings in any day, no rest is required. If a player pitches 12 or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest must be observed. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched an inning.
- Only regular season managers and coaches from the Big League division are eligible to coach.
- A player may count participation in three Special Game tournaments toward their 60 percent Tournament eligibility.