

Little League Scandals History and Relevant Timeline

1958 – International Regions created.

Europe, Pacific (Hawaii only until 1962), Latin America, Canada regions were created as the Little League World expanded from four domestic teams to add an additional four international teams.

1960 – First Live Broadcast of the Little League World Series on ABC's Wide World of Sports

Before establishing an annual tradition, ABC broadcast the Little League World Series Championship game live for the first time in 1960. Prior to this, CBS had carried the very first tape-delayed, black-and-white broadcast in 1953, but ABC stepped in to take over the television rights at the turn of the decade.

https://www.espn.com/sports/llws13/story/_/id/9550886/little-league-world-series-history

<https://www.baseballamerica.com/stories/how-the-little-league-world-series-became-one-of-summer-most-watched-sporting-events/>

1962 – Pacific Region Realignment

Hawaii was moved to the West Region organizational structure and the Pacific Region admitted Japan as the lone country participating in the Pacific Region.

1963 – ABC's Wide World of Sports Broadcasts

Starting in 1963, ABC formalized its annual relationship with Little League International by making the World Series Championship game a staple of ABC's Wide World of Sports.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_League_World_Series_on_television

<https://www.baseballamerica.com/stories/how-the-little-league-world-series-became-one-of-summer-most-watched-sporting-events/>

The Financials: During this pre-cable era, broadcast rights were treated as standard programming fees for a single-event television window rather than the multi-platform, multi-million dollar corporate equity partnerships that began when ESPN entered the fold in 1983.

https://www.espn.com/espn/story/_/id/29724545/espn-llws-announce-media-rights-extension-2030

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_League_World_Series_on_television

July 16, 1964 – Public Law 88-378 signed by Lyndon B. Johnson

It is the only youth sports organization to receive a federal incorporation charter from the U.S. government. Little League submit an annual report of its operations directly to the U.S. Congress.

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title36/subtitle2/partB/chapter1305&edition=prelim>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_League_Baseball

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_League_Baseball

1968 – Guam added to the Pacific Region with Japan.

Guam was the first international team from the Far East to join outside of Japan

1969 – Taiwan added to the Pacific Region

The Taiwan Baseball Association began their Regional and World Series dominance that would span decades in not only the region, but the World Series as well.

1970 – Pacific Region realigned and re-branded to the Far East Region

As Little League continued to expand, the Far East Region gained the Marshall Islands, Philippines adding to Japan, Guam and Taiwan.

SCANDAL #1 – Girls in Little League

1974 – Little League adds Softball for girls

First Little League softball world series was held in 1974

1974 – Little League Threatens to revoke charter of New Jersey Little League who allowed a girl to play in the Baseball division of Little League

<https://www.littleleague.org/news/1974-the-year-little-league-changed-forever/>

December 26, 1974 – H.R. 8864 enacted amending the original Federal Charter of Little League to allow girls to play in Little League

Signed by President Gerald Ford, this was intended to prevent Little League from denying girls participation in Little League.

SCANDAL #2 – Overage Asian Players

November 11, 1974 – Little League Bans all non-US teams

On November 11, 1974, Little League Baseball announced that all non-US teams were banned from competing in the Little League World Series. This marked the first instance of an eligibility scandal in Little League history.

Initial Reasoning:

- Travel Costs
- United States Nationalism

Later Reasoning:

- Too much emphasis on this particular age group causing an “Olympic” type of atmosphere at the 12 year old level.

In the 1970s, "whispers about overage Asian participants grew to shouts" when Taiwan amassed these stats in the six years from 1969-1974:

- World Series Record – 17 Wins, 1 Loss
- World Series winning percentage: 0.944
- World Series Score Differential: 169 – 15
- Taiwan did not allow a single run in 14 of 18 games

During the 1975 Far East Regional tournament, even though the Far East was not allowed to send a representative to the world series, Taiwan had a record of 4-0 and outscored their opponents in the Regional tournament 50 – 5.

December, 1975 – Ban on non-US teams repealed

The Little League Board of Directors voted 12-1 to repeal the ban on non-US teams allowing international teams to return for the 1976 world series. Little League never addressed how to prevent overage or out of boundary participation at this time.

1976 – Japan defeats Taiwan in the Far East Regional Tournament

Japan would go on to win the Little League World Series in 1976 with a 3-0 record outscoring their opponents 39-3 continuing the dominance of the Far East Region.

1982 – Kirkland National defeats Taiwan ending their 31 game World Series winning streak

From 1970 to 1982, Taiwan was undefeated when reaching the Little League World Series until Kirkland National from Washington state defeated Taiwan in the championship game 6-0. Little League still has not addressed overage players after the Far East's dominance of 13 years straight.

1986 – Minimum Play Introduced for Tournament Play

Little League tournament teams have always been allowed to carry a roster of 14 players. However, up until 1986, there was no requirement to play all of the players during any given game during the international tournament. As of 1986, all players on a team during tournament play were required to play each and every player a minimum of 3 defensive outs in the field, and each player was now required to get one plate appearance forcing teams to play rostered players in every game. This led to many unintentional consequences of teams starting to carry less than the 14 maximum players on a roster. Many rule changes were made between 1986 and 2023 trying to combat the unintended consequences of this rule during tournament play, none of which worked until the continuous batting order was implemented in 2023.

1983 – Landmark agreement between ESPN and Little League

The 1983 agreement between ESPN and Little League International marks the foundational moment that brought cable television into Williamsport.

<https://ca.sports.yahoo.com/news/why-karl-ravech-calling-little-081002029.html>

Breaking the Broadcast Monopoly: Prior to 1983, ABC held exclusive TV rights and only broadcast a single game—the World Series Championship game—which was usually shown on a tape-delayed basis on Wide World of Sports. The 1983 deal allowed a second network on the complex for the first time.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_League_World_Series

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Journal/Issues/2019/08/19/Leagues-and-Governing-Bodies/Little-League/>

The Launching Pad: The broadcast was a major success for the young cable network, which was looking for live, family-friendly summer content. Though they did not broadcast in 1984, 1985, or 1986, the proof of concept from the 1983 contract directly convinced corporate executives to return in 1987. From 1987 onward, ESPN signed permanent, consecutive multi-year deals to become the full-time home of the early-round and regional tournaments.

https://www.espn.com/espn/story/_/id/29724545/espn-llws-announce-media-rights-extension-2030
<https://ca.sports.yahoo.com/news/why-karl-ravech-calling-little-081002029.html>

1992 – Little League implements a Pool Play format replacing the single elimination tournament format at the World Series level. This was the first time a schedule format had been changed since the inception of Little League World Series in 1947.

SCANDAL #3 – Overage and Out of Boundary Asian players

1992 – Philippines Disqualified after winning the Little League World Series

When the Philippines won the 1992 Little League World Series with a record of 4-1 outscoring their opponents 36-15 and after defeating Taiwan in the Regional tournament.

Many claims had been made by Little League officials during the tournament about the Philippines team being ineligible due to overage and out of boundary players, but nothing was proven during the tournament. After the team returned home to the Philippines, local reporters ran stories about out of boundary and overage players in the local media. After a formal investigation by Little League (only after the media reported on the allegations), Little League finally disqualified the Philippines team awarding the championship to Long Beach, California. No additional penalties were issued and no investigation was done on Taiwan during this season.

1993 – Multiple disqualifications in the Far East Region

After the conclusion of the 1993 Far East Regional tournament, Little League determined that Taiwan, China, Japan and South Korea were unable to satisfy new age and residency verification that had been implemented in the off-season to prevent a similar situation to the Philippines disqualification in 1992. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CMNI) was awarded the Far East championship as the 5th place team and participated in the Little League World Series failing to reach the elimination round with a 1-2 record in pool play. This marked the first time since 1969 that a team from the Far East/Pacific Region did not make the elimination round of the Little League world series. No additional penalties were administered by Little League.

SCANDAL #4 – Taiwan admits they cannot adhere to Little League age and boundary rules

1997 – Taiwan Leaves Little League

Taiwan would return to the Little League World Series in 1994 and dominate once again in 1995 and 1996 with no investigation from Little League. However, in 1997, Stephen D. Keener made a statement, stating “The leagues in Taiwan were unable at that time to adhere to certain Little League rules and regulations regarding residency, and the area from which a single chartered league could draw its players,” regarding the Taiwan Baseball Association’s decision to voluntarily leave the Little League program. This would mark the end of Taiwan and Far East Region’s dominance that had made it to the Little League championship game 27 out of the last 29 years, winning the championship in 22 years that they were allowed to compete. At this time, Little League still had not taken any official action to combat the allegations that the Far East regional teams had been accused of outside of the 1992 and 1993 disqualifications.

SCANDAL #5 – Boys playing in Girls Softball

1998 – Boys play in the Big League Softball Eastern Regional Tournament

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1998/08/13/boys-beaten-in-softball-tournament/30cc5da5-c3aa-407a-83b8-719d7f660be7/>

The 1998 New York State District 2 Big League Softball All-Star team was the team that had boys on its roster. It won the New York state championship and then traveled to the Big League Softball Eastern Regional Tournament in Hughesville, Pennsylvania, in August 1998.

To combat this, Little League created a Boys Softball division to prevent boys playing in a girls specific division in 2000. This defines yet another scandal where Little League has taken reactionary measures rather than proactive measures to ensure the integrity of the Little League organization and mission.

May 15, 2000 – Congressional Reporting Requirement Eliminated

The reporting requirement was subsequently eliminated as part of Congress's broader effort to eliminate obsolete federal reporting requirements. Public Law 104-66, §3003 terminated the applicable reporting provisions effective May 15, 2000. The U.S. Code specifically identifies Little League Baseball, Incorporated among the organizations whose reporting requirement was terminated.

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?edition=prelim&num=0&req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title36-section130510>

June, 2000 – Little League signs a Media Rights extension with ABC, ESPN, Disney

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Daily/Issues/2000/06/19/Sports-Media/ABC-ESPN-EXTEND-LITTLE-LEAGUE-AGREEMENT-FOR-SIX-YEARS/>

Relevant Contract Details:

- ABC Sports will expand its coverage of the Series to include the U.S. Championship on Saturday and the World Series Championship on Sunday starting in 2021
- ESPN and ESPN2 will televise eight U.S. Regional Championship games, as well as many of the Int'l and U.S. pool-play games from Williamsport, PA.
- Additionally, ESPN2 will continue to televise the Big League Baseball and Big League Softball World Series Championship games.
- ESPN would pay \$1.17 Million US Dollars per year for the duration of the contract to assist with many financial efforts, including expanding the facilities for Little League participation in Williamsport, PA. <https://www.espn.com/sportsbusiness/s/2003/0819/1599112.html>

This contract along with other capital funding through sponsorships would allow Little League to expand from an eight team world series to a sixteen team world series in 2021 and build a second stadium, Volunteer Stadium ready for use in 2001. <https://www.littleleague.org/news/little-league-volunteer-stadium-the-field-of-opportunity/>

2001 – Little League expands the World Series from 8 teams to 16 teams.

Regional Expansions:

- Domestic Regions
 - West Region split into West and Northwest Regions
 - East Region split into Mid-Atlantic and New England Regions

- Central Region split into Midwest and Great Lakes Regions
- South Region split into Southeast and Gulf States Regions
- International Regions
 - Latin America Region split into Latin America, Caribbean and Mexico Regions
 - Europe Region split into Europe and Transatlantic Regions
 - Far East Region split into Asia and Pacific Regions
 - Canada Region unchanged

With the increased television coverage of Little League games at the World Series and Regional levels, this added incentive for leagues across the world to make it at least to the regional level of Little League play for national and international television exposure of the participants.

SCANDAL #6 – Danny Almonnte

2001 – Bronx, New York Disqualified

After the Bronx, New York team, Rolando Paulino Little League dominated competition with their star pitcher, Danny Almonte through the Mid-Atlantic Regional tournament and into the world series where he threw two no-hitters, The Bronx team was finally eliminated from the tournament by Apopka Florida in the elimination round. At this point, many questioned Danny's age and composure claiming he was overage and ineligible to participate in the Little League division. After private investigators, the media and Dominican Republic officials obtained documentation to show that Danny's age had been falsified in documents used to show his eligibility for Little League, Little League eventually disqualified the Bronx team after the World Series had been concluded, but not without external investigators outside of the Little League organization. Every game that the Bronx team played was forfeited as a result of this controversy, the largest penalty handed down by Little League to date for eligibility violations. Since the violation was limited to one individual player on the team, no additional penalties were leveraged against anyone else.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2001_Little_League_World_Series

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danny_Almonnte

As a result of the falsification of birth records by the Almonte family, Little League implemented new age verification processes in 2002 to prevent this from happening again. Californian birth certificates as a result due to their ease of falsifying were banned from being used in Little League for age verification.

2006 – ABC/ESPN Little League Contract Extension

The new eight year contract has ABC/ESPN paying Little League \$3.76 Million US Dollars annually for the duration of the contract totaling roughly \$30.1 Million over eight years.

The 2006 ABC/ESPN Little League contract extension was a landmark broadcast rights agreement signed in late 2006 (and publicly announced in January 2007) that secured an eight-year contract extension keeping Little League International tournaments on the ESPN family of networks through the 2014 season. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/little-league-stays-espn-127296/>

The 2006 World Championship game was historically planned to be the final broadcast ever under the "ABC Sports" banner before ESPN completely absorbed ABC's sports division. Though a rainout pushed the actual 2006 final to ESPN2, the new 2006 extension formalized the integrated multimedia era under ESPN. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_League_World_Series

Because of the financial influx from this 2006 ESPN agreement, Little League International was able to lower local charter fees for the first time in its history (dropping them from \$18 to \$16 per team in 2007). It also allowed the parent organization to start absorbing tournament travel costs for local leagues. https://www.coastalpoint.com/little-league-television-contract-with-espn-extended/article_8dbfba31-fbb7-5468-a8c1-91195ac6de07.html
https://www.pennlive.com/sports/2013/08/little_league_espn_reach_76_mi_1.html

2007 – Little League Changes Pitching Rules

Little League drastically changed their pitching rules in order to better protect the health of pitchers. Since the inception of Little League, pitchers have been required days rest based upon the number of innings that the pitcher pitched, which did not necessarily take into account the actual stress on the arm and body. As a result, Little League implemented a strict number of pitches that a pitcher is allowed to throw per game and a tiered system dictating number of days of rest and recovery needed based upon the number of pitches thrown. This drastically changed how managers managed their pitching from 2007 onward. Slight modifications to this rule have been made over the years, but nothing that drastically changed the rule itself.

SCANDAL #7 – Little League Visas Denied

August 2011 – Uganda Little League Team Denied Visas

A team from the Reverend John Foundation Little League in Uganda was denied visas after winning the Europe & Middle east & Africa (EMEA) Regional tournament in 2011. The U.S. State Department denied the players' visa applications that prevented the team from traveling to Williamsport to play in the 2011 Little League World Series. As a result, a team from Arabian American Little League from Dhahran Saudi Arabia (essentially a US military base league) was the regional runner-up and allowed to participate in the World Series.

August 2013 – Little League and ESPN Contract Extension

The Final Year of the 2007 Deal: Throughout the 2014 tournament, Little League operated on the tail-end of its previous 8-year contract. Under that arrangement, ESPN paid Little League just over \$4 million for the 2014 broadcast year.

<https://www.sungazette.com/news/top-news/2013/08/little-league-espn-renew-for-8-years-76-million/>

The Looming Payout Bump: Anticipating the future, Little League and ESPN had actually signed a successor agreement early in August 2013. While the old contract ended with the 2014 games, the newly negotiated 8-year, \$76 million extension kicked in immediately after, effectively doubling their annual media payout from \$4 million to \$8.5 million–\$10 million per year starting with the 2015 tournament loop.

https://www.espn.com/sports/llws14/story/_/id/13214526/little-league-using-4-million-tv-revenue-grow-youth-sports-opportunities

<https://www.sungazette.com/news/top-news/2013/08/little-league-espn-renew-for-8-years-76-million/>

As a result of this contract extension, The Australian Baseball Federation aligned with Little League to create a separate standalone region for Australia with direct entry into the Little League world series. According to officials at Little League International, Australia is not required to adhere to boundary or residency restrictions essentially creating a travel ball program in all of Australia.

Also with this contract extension, Little League created the Intermediate (50/70) division of little league with the world series for this division to be broadcast on ESPN and hosted in Livermore California where it remains today.

SCANDAL #8 – Jackie Robinson West Little League out of Boundary

February 11, 2015 – Jackie Robinson West Disqualified

Little League released a press release stating “After an extensive review of the operations of Jackie Robinson West Little League and Illinois District 4, the Little League International Charter/Tournament Committee has determined that the Jackie Robinson West Little League and Illinois District 4 Administrator knowingly violated Little League International Rules and Regulations by placing players on their team who did not qualify to play because they lived outside the team’s boundaries.”

<https://www.littleleague.org/news/little-league-international-finds-jackie-robinson-west-little-league-violated-rules-regulations/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disqualification_of_Jackie_Robinson_West_Little_League_from_the_2014_Little_League_World_Series#Innovation)

[Disqualification of Jackie Robinson West Little League from the 2014 Little League World Series#Innovation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disqualification_of_Jackie_Robinson_West_Little_League_from_the_2014_Little_League_World_Series#Innovation)

The 2014 Little League World Series was filled with feel good stories about a team from Chicago’s south side overcoming adversity, gangs and other societal roadblocks as well as a team from Philadelphia, Taney Youth Baseball and their dominant female pitcher Mo’ne Davis. To this day, ESPN continues to reference the impact Mo’ne Davis had on the entire Little League community, even though 2014 was mired by the Jackie Robinson West Scandal.

An anonymous Little League employee has stated that the eligibility of Jackie Robinson West was raised during the 2013 Regional Tournament in Indiana and ignored by the Tournament Committee. The same eligibility questions were raised by the same employee at the Regional tournament in 2014 at the Regional Tournament in Indiana and subsequently ignored yet again by the Tournament Committee showing that Little League International knew about the ineligibility of Jackie Robinson West, yet chose not to do anything about it stating “They’re not going to win anyway...” according to the anonymous source.

Lawsuits against Little League continued until 2021 regarding the disqualification of Jackie Robinson West which were eventually settled out of court. Many innovations came out of this scandal including the Little League LeagueFinder, and electronic boundary system that had originally been created by volunteers in the Seattle area and the Little League Datacenter. All electronic gatekeepers that were supposed to prevent anything like the Jackie Robinson West eligibility falsification from happening again. The League President of Jackie Robinson West, The District Administrator of Illinois District 4 were both banned from Little League for life, and the entire district was disbanded and distributed among neighboring districts to remove the individual volunteers from ever being allowed to participate in Little League again. This was by far the largest sanction ever handed down by Little League to date for eligibility violations.

SCANDAL #9 – Little League Softball team Purposely Loses Game

August 18, 2015 – South Snohomish Little League Throws Game

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/08/18/432721453/accusations-of-game-throwing-rile-little-league-softball-world-series>

A team from South Snohomish Little League in Washington State was accused of throwing a game in the Little League Softball World Series in Portland, OR in effort to eliminate a team from Iowa based upon Pool Play tie-breaker rules. While technically not illegal by rules standards, it did bring up moral and ethical discussions whether or not this behavior should be allowed. This scandal did affect ESPN coverage.

The Little League Tournament Committee determined that the game was in fact intentionally thrown by South Snohomish Little League and required them to play a one-game playoff game against the team from Iowa as punishment for their behavior. South Snohomish ended up losing the game to Iowa eliminating them from the tournament. This was yet another unprecedented ruling from the Little League Tournament Committee that drastically changed the outcome of a World Series.

SCANDAL #10 – Junior League Softball Team Disqualified for Social Media Posts

August 5th, 2017 – Atlee Little League Junior Softball team disqualified from the Junior Softball World Series for offensive social media posts directed at the Host team, Kirkland American Little League. This scandal did affect ESPN coverage.

<https://www.jacksonville.com/story/news/nation-world/2017/08/06/six-middle-fingers-snapchat-lead-disqualification-junior-league-softball/15767689007/>

The Photo: Following a tense 1–0 semifinal victory over the host team, Kirkland American (from Washington), members of the Atlee team posted a photo on Snapchat. The picture showed six players giving the middle finger to the camera with the caption, "watch out host."

No long term or short term penalties other than the disqualification were handed down by Little League and no rule changes were made.

Public Debate: The incident sparked an intense national debate, with many columnists and parents arguing that punishing an entire team of 12-to-14-year-olds for a single social media mistake made by a few individuals was excessively harsh. <https://sports.yahoo.com/little-league-removes-softball-team-world-series-social-media-post-212434926.html>
<https://www.wftv.com/news/trending-now/little-league-softball-team-ejected-from-world-series-over-offensive-snapchat-photo/584210708/>

August 2020 – Little League & ESPN Media Rights Contract Extension

The 2022 season marked the final year of the previous \$76 million media rights agreement before ESPN and Little League International transitioned into a newly negotiated, much larger successor contract.

<https://www.pennlive.com/sports/2020/08/contract-extension-gives-espn-rights-to-televise-little-league-world-series-through-2030.html>

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Daily/Issues/2020/08/24/Media/LLWS-ESPN/>

The Final Year of the 2015–2022 Payout: For the 2022 tournament calendar, ESPN paid Little League International approximately \$10 million for the year's global broadcast rights.

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Daily/Issues/2020/08/24/Media/LLWS-ESPN/>

<https://www.pennlive.com/sports/2020/08/contract-extension-gives-espn-rights-to-televisе-little-league-world-series-through-2030.html>

The Successor Contract Already Secured: In August 2020, both sides finalized a massive eight-year contract extension running from 2023 through 2030. This agreement, which officially triggered right after the 2022 World Series concluded, bumped annual media payments up roughly 50% to more than \$17 million annually beginning in 2023.

<https://espnpressroom.com/press-release/espn-little-league-international-reach-eight-year-media-rights-extension/>

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Daily/Issues/2020/08/24/Media/LLWS-ESPN/>

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Articles/2025/10/24/little-league-intl-getting-17m-annually-from-espn-for-broadcast-rights/>

<https://www.buyingsandlot.com/p/espn-is-paying-big-bucks-for-little-league-world-series>

The 20-Team Expansion Milestone: The 2022 tournament was the very first time the Little League Baseball World Series expanded its bracket layout from 16 to 20 teams. The 2022 contract accommodated this layout change by requiring ESPN and ABC to produce and broadcast more live games from Williamsport than ever before. https://www.espn.com/espn/story/_/id/29724545/espn-llws-announce-media-rights-extension-2030

<https://espnpressroom.com/press-release/espn-little-league-international-reach-eight-year-media-rights-extension/>

Massive Pivot to ESPN+: Under the terms winding down in 2022, the contract scheduled a record 341 total youth baseball and softball tournament games across the family of networks. Over 240 of those matchups aired exclusively as live streaming content via ESPN+

<https://www.littleleague.org/news/little-league-world-series-set-to-return-with-full-participant-field-and-fans-at-all-divisions-of-play/>

The MLB Little League Classic: The contract also preserved exclusive Sunday Night Baseball broadcast rights for the annual MLB Little League Classic played at Historic Bowman Field in Williamsport.

https://www.espn.com/espn/story/_/id/29724545/espn-llws-announce-media-rights-extension-2030

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Daily/Issues/2020/08/24/Media/LLWS-ESPN/>

2022 – Little League World Series Expands from 16 to 20 teams

As a result of the newly minted ESPN Media Rights deal and the income it generated for Little League, The World Series in Williamsport was provided financial backing to expand facilities and accommodate four additional teams going forward. This also caused a realignment of Regions not seen since 2001.

Domestic Regional Realignment:

- West and Northwest regions split into West, Northwest and Mountain Regions
- Mid-Atlantic and New England regions split into Metro, New England and Mid-Atlantic regions
- All other regions remained unchanged with the exception of some states like Colorado being moved from the Southwest region to the newly created Mountain region.

International Region Realignment

- Many adjustments were made to international regions including rotating regions like Curacao being a region one year and not the next.

2023 – Little League Continuous Batting Order (CBO) Replaces Minimum Play Rules

Due to the numerous manager suspensions and violations since the minimum play rule was implemented in 1986, as well as the ever changing rules regarding minimum play, Little League recognized that the rule had become too complex to maintain. As a result, Little League implemented the Continuous Batting Order (CBO) rule to assist managers and coaches in effort to prevent controversies.

There is no longer a defensive minimum-play requirement under the tournament CBO system. Players can be freely substituted defensively, subject to the applicable pitcher/catcher rules.
<https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/mandatory-play-little-league-international-tournament-rule-9/>

2025 – Mandatory Registration through SportsConnect

Little League states that as part of Central Registration, which became mandatory in 2025, all leagues in the United States are required to use Sports Connect for player registration. The registration data is automatically synchronized with the Little League Data Center.
<https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/position-policy-statements/websites/>
<https://www.littleleague.org/partnerships/official-sponsors/sports-connect/>

Little League had originally requested Bonzi Software to implement a Unique ID system for participants in 2015, and was advised against that by Bonzi due to concerns about storing personally identifiable information of Minors in an electronic database including but not limited to children's birth certificates and residency identification connecting them to their parents and a potential of identify theft of minors.

Year Development

2015 Little League signs a contract with Bonzi Software to develop the first electronic boundary system for Little League integrating with the Little League Datacenter.

https://stacksports.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/BSS_Bonzi_acquisition_Apr5-Final.pdf

2016 Sports Connect/Blue Sombrero becomes Little League's official technology provider; online registration is available.

<https://sportsconnect.com/2021/08/24/little-league-international-extends-partnership-with-sports-connect-to-grow-participation/>

2019 Blue Sombrero changes its name to Sports Connect.

<https://www.littleleague.org/partnerships/technology/faqs/>

2021 Sports Connect introduces its Mobile-First registration system and automatic Little League registration setup.

<https://www.littleleague.org/partnerships/technology/faqs/>

2022 Sports Connect implements Single Sign-On and begins consolidating duplicate parent accounts.

<https://www.littleleague.org/partnerships/technology/faqs/>

2025 Central Registration becomes mandatory; U.S. Little Leagues must use Sports Connect for player registration.

<https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/position-policy-statements/websites/>

SCANDALS #11-13 2025 – Multiple Eligibility Disqualifications and Visa Issues

2025 Tulsa National Little League Softball

Multiple protests were filed against Tulsa National LL Softball from Deer Creek LL, Pottawami County LL Hallettsville LL and Midway LL regarding six players on the Tulsa National LL team that lived and went to school out of the league boundaries. All protests were denied by the Little League Tournament Committee and no penalty was given.

2025 Tulsa National Little League Baseball

During the Regional tournament in Waco, TX in July/August of 2025, a player on the Tulsa National Baseball team was admitting to players and adults that he lived in Missouri and was just a “pick up” player on the Tulsa National Little League team for the “Waco Tournament”. No protests were filed due to no one believing this could have been the case. This was never brought before the Little League Tournament Committee in the form of a protest.

2025 Nicaragua Senior Little League Baseball

A team from Maracaibo, Venezuela, Cacique Mara Little League was denied visas by the United States State Department and prevented from playing in the Senior League Baseball World Series in Easley, South Carolina.

Visa problem: The team traveled to Bogotá, Colombia, to apply for U.S. visas. The applications were denied, leaving the team unable to enter the United States for the World Series.

<https://apnews.com/article/d296bcf7296e849e27de1b1f8cd30edb>

SCANDALS #14-17 – Eligibility Violations

2026 Northern Colorado Little League Disqualified

The disqualification of this team in 2026 was for the following reasons:

- Using players from a travel-ball team in a manner that violated Little League's roster/participation rules.
- The newly formed league reportedly had players who had not properly participated in the required Little League regular season.
- The team was also accused of playing too many games in a single day during the qualification period, with some games reportedly shortened to three innings.
- Little League ultimately removed Northern Colorado from the tournament, despite the team having already won two games.
- <https://brobible.com/sports/article/little-league-baseball-eligibility-scandal-northern-colorado-monarch-disqualified/>

August 6th, 2026 Elmhurst Youth Baseball Disqualified

The disqualification of this Junior division team was for the following reasons:

- Little League International announced that it had reviewed a protest and determined that one player on the Elmhurst team was ineligible under Little League's Official Regulations,

Playing Rules, and Operating Policies. The entire tournament team was therefore declared ineligible and its most recent game was forfeited.

July 21st, 2026 Tulsa National Little League Softball Team Disqualified

This disqualification came because this team returned 9 of 10 players from the previous year and protests along with it. It took 3 subsequent protests totalling 10 against this specific team over two years for Little League to take action on account of:

- “... the Little League International Tournament Committee has determined that the adult volunteers and parents did not provide sufficient documentation to verify that all players are eligible to participate in the International Tournament ...”

Little League did not address any of the previous protests that were denied for essentially the same reason over the last two seasons, and did not address any penalties requested in the protest except for removing the team from the tournament and forfeiting their last game. Many questions still remain regarding this disqualification.

August 10th, 2026 – Tulsa National Little League Baseball Team Disqualified

Following the disqualification of the same league’s softball team, the baseball team was disqualified because of:

- “... the Little League® International Tournament Committee has determined that a player who participated on the team during the International Tournament is ineligible.”

This was only acted upon by Little League after the 3rd protest by multiple leagues within days, all protesting essentially the same eligibility violation. Additionally, allegations of falsifying a Challenger (special needs) program and the legitimacy of the entire Tulsa National Little League program were questioned in protests. No additional penalties have been handed down by Little League. These violations by Tulsa National are more egregious than anything Jackie Robinson West did 12 years prior, yet less penalties have been handed down to Tulsa National than ever were against Jackie Robinson West.

August 2026, Little League International Response

In an interview that Maren Angles from Softball on SI did with Dan Velte, Senior Director of Operations and Chair of the Tournament/Charter Committee, when Maren asked “How do you make sure that all protests are handled consistently?”, Dan Velte responded “We treat every protest on a case-by-case basis” essentially admitting that rules are not followed consistently by Little League when it comes to rule enforcement.

Oklahoma Little Leagues

As of September, 2026, the existing little league charters in Oklahoma are as follows as no other leagues currently exist in Oklahoma:

- Deer Creek Little League (Did not participate in the 2026 state tournament)
- Pottawami County Little League (Did not participate in the 2026 state tournament)
- Tulsa National Little League
- Washington County Little League
- Oklahoma City Parks & Rec Little League

Here is a list of previous leagues that have been documented as having played in regional tournaments or world series tournaments in the past. What happened to these leagues?

- Green Country Little League (Muskogee, OK) LLSB World Series Champion 2021
- Tulsa American Little League (2009, 2010)
- Miami Little League (1993, 1996, 1998, 1999)

- Cherokee County National Little League (1992, 1994, 1995, 1997)
- Grove Little League (1991)
- Tahlequah Little League (1990)
- Tulsa Little League (1988)