

STRUCTURE AND LEVELS OF PLAY

The information below will help you find the level best suited to your child's development. If after reading this information you still have questions, please contact the MDLL Player Agent at PlayerAgent@mdll.org

To register one or more players for the **upcoming season**, [click here](#).

League Structure and Levels of Play

The league is divided into seven levels of play ensuring that children participate at a level commensurate with their age, maturity, and ability. For baseball, MDLL offers four divisions within the Minor League (Tee-ball, A, AA, and AAA) and a Majors Division. We also offer an Intermediate Division level of play designed for 13-year old players on a larger (50/70) field as a transition from Little League to the standard, larger (60/90) high school and above level of play that are on larger (60/90) fields. MDLL is proud to also offer a girl's softball Division for those ages 9-12 at all experience levels.

All teams, except for those at Majors and AAA, are disbanded at the end of each season and new teams are formed the following year. That said, the league tries to keep teams together from season-to-season and division-to-division within the Minors for the enjoyment of players and continuity of learning. This is, of course, dependent upon available Managers and Coaches, all of whom are volunteers, as well as the number of players within each division. Players who are candidates for AAA or Majors are required to participate in a skills assessment session that allows the Managers to place them into the level where they will be most successful. They will then be placed into a draft pool for assignment to a team. Please see our League Structure, Levels of Play, Draft Eligibility, and Player Assessment areas for more information.

The following is a brief description of each baseball division:

- **Tee-ball**
 - Team Formation: Teams are formed primarily by common neighborhoods and schools among the players. Requests to play with specific coaches or players are accommodated if possible. Players learn, develop, and practice fundamental baseball skills in a nurturing, fun environment. The batter hits the ball from a batting tee, developing hand-eye coordination and the swing technique without fear of being hit by a pitched ball.
 - Age Range: League age 4-year olds; any new 5 and 6-year olds.
 - Schedule: One game per week on Saturdays and one practice per week (typically on a weekday evening). Each lasts about one hour.

- **A**
 - Team Formation: Teams are formed primarily by common neighborhoods and schools among the players. Requests to play with specific coaches or players are accommodated if possible. In order to balance the competitiveness of teams, the age and experience level of players will be

considered in assigning players to teams. This division is focused completely on player development, but competition is introduced as a part of the game at this level. Outs can be made on batters and base runners, and batters can strike out. The strong developmental aspect of the level dictates a few unique rules and practices. **We utilize a pitching machine in order to allow for more consistent pitch delivery so that batters can better focus on their hitting technique.** Defensive coaches are positioned on the field during play. Teams use a continuous batting order. Playing time is divided evenly; the opportunity to play a variety of positions is afforded each child.

- Age Range: Mostly league age 7 and 8-year and some 6-year olds.
- Schedule: One game per week on Saturdays and one practice per week on a weekday evening. Each lasts about one hour and 30 minutes.

- **AA**

- Team Formation: Teams are formed primarily by common neighborhoods and schools among the players. Requests to play with specific coaches or players are accommodated if possible. In order to balance the competitiveness of teams, the age and experience level of players will be considered in assigning players to teams. At AA, the focus on player development is balanced with increased team competitiveness. This is the level where players first pitch in games. A continuous batting order is used, playing time is distributed evenly and each player will play infield positions in every game. While all players should be encouraged and taught to play all positions, for reasons of competitiveness, managers may assign increased playing time at key positions based on player skills.
- Age Range: Mostly league age 8 and 9-year olds with a very few advanced 7-year olds and 10-year olds who are determined to not be ready for AAA.

- **AAA**

- Team Formation. Players must participate in a skills assessment, and teams will be formed by a player draft. Not all players eligible for AAA will be selected in the draft to play at the AAA level. If AAA teams need to replace players during the season, AAA eligible players will be selected from AA level teams. While Little League Baseball is always focused on player development, AAA is a completely competitive level. Some special rules still apply to help managers even out playing time and assignment of positions. Specifically, teams use a continuous batting order and no player may sit out for consecutive innings. AAA players are beginning to develop advanced baseball skills and position specialization is beginning to take place.
- Age Range: Mostly league age 10 and 11-year olds with some 9 year olds and a very few advanced 8-year olds.

- **Majors**
 - Age Range: Mostly league age 11 and 12-year olds with a very few advanced 10-year olds.
 - Team Formation: Players must participate in a skills assessment/tryout, and teams will be formed by a player draft. While Little League baseball is always focused on player development, the Majors level is the most competitive level. The Majors level follows official Little League rules and regulations with no special rules such as the continuous batting order used at the lower levels. Following standard baseball rules regarding substitutions, etc. means game strategy and substitutions will be different than players and parents experienced at the lower levels. Majors level teams play “real” baseball at a competitive but supportive level.

- **Intermediate (50/70)**
 - Description: The Intermediate 50/70 division bridges the transition from Little League (46/60) to Junior League Baseball on a full-size field (60/90). It is a league for 13 year-olds whose advanced skills permit rules that are closer to conventional baseball, such as leading off bases, pickoff attempts, etc. In the traditional Little League (Majors) Division, a runner cannot leave the base until the pitched ball reaches the batter, so pickoffs are not part of the game at that level. In addition, Intermediate (50/70) Baseball Division games will be played on a field that is not quite as large as a conventional diamond, but bigger than the traditional Little League field.
 - Age Range: 13 year olds.