

Player Assessment FAQs

What time are Player Assessments?

- Player Assessment sessions are typically in mid-March, immediately after the close of registration. Once dates have been established, a league-wide email will inform parents of the place and time of the Player Assessments. This information will also be posted on the website, including on the Master Schedule. Every effort must be made to attend the scheduled assessments. If there are extenuating circumstances prohibiting attendance, parents/guardians must contact the Player Agent immediately to discuss options. In limited cases, a "make up" assessment may be offered, however please note that it may not include all managers and that your player goes into the draft without the advantage of being assessed in comparison to other registered players.

Does my child need to go to the Player Assessment?

Yes, all registered Majors and AAA players must go to the Player Assessment, regardless of whether they are returning players or new to the league. We require this for three principal reasons. First, managers must be able to see all available talent in order to best conduct the draft process. Second, there may be new Managers who are not familiar with your player's abilities. Third, Managers may be unfamiliar with your player's abilities if they are moving up from another division.

What should my child bring?

Players should bring:

- Baseball glove
- Batting helmet
- Bats will be provided; however, players are welcome to bring their own Little League approved bat if they would like. Although we encourage players to bring their own bats, they must be checked prior to batting and must have the USABat label.
- If the tryout is held indoors, wear gym shoes. No cleats will be allowed.
- Players should wear baseball pants or comfortable clothes.
- Please be sure to collect all of your belongings when the tryouts end.

How can I prepare my child for the Player Assessment?

Weather permitting, get out and play catch at home or take your player to a batting cage to get the cobwebs off of their swing. Usually, MDLL offers weekly clinics to get players back into the groove after a winter off; sign up your player up and have them attend.

At the Assessments, please encourage your player to try his or her best at the tryouts, but in the end, this is supposed to be FUN! We want the kids to relax and take a deep breath - everyone of league age is going to get on a team!

What if my child can't make the Player Assessment dates?

Every effort must be made to attend the scheduled assessments. If there are extenuating circumstances prohibiting attendance, parents/guardians must contact the Player Agent

immediately to discuss options. In limited cases, a "make up" assessment may be offered, however please note that it may not include all managers and that your player goes into the draft without the advantage of being assessed in comparison to other registered players. **Majors and AAA players who do not attend a Player Assessment will not be included in the Draft Pool and will be assigned to teams by "Hat Pick". See "Hat Picks" below.**

What if a registered player can't participate in the Player Assessment due to an injury?

A registered and paid player who is physically unable to participate in the Assessment due to a temporary injury (e.g., broken arm, sprained ankle, etc.) should notify the Player Agent of their injury and recuperative status and then still attend the Player Assessment session. They will have an opportunity to meet the managers and discuss their experience, but will not be required to participate with the other players at the assessment. MDLL believes this attendance is important so that Managers (especially new Managers) have some familiarity with every player prior to draft. A player who has a temporary injury will still be included in the draft process..

What if I want my child to remain in Minors (A-AAA divisions)?

The only specific issue is for players who are league age 12. In this case, Little League International requires that all 12 year-olds, regardless of their experience level, be assigned to a Majors Division team. This might present a physical or emotional risk for a player. When it is in the best interest of the player, his parents can request a waiver of this rule to keep the player at the appropriate level. Likewise, if in the opinion of the Player Agent, Division Managers, and the Board that a 12-year old may risk injury to himself/herself or cause injury to others based on their skill level, the Player Agent may contact the parents/guardians to have them consider a waiver allowing the player to remain in Minors.

In both cases, parents wishing to exercise this option must notify the Player Agent in writing.

For players under league age 12, Occasionally, in the interest of a player's safety or development, parents may prefer that the player not play at his or her highest level of eligibility. Sometimes playing a level below the minimum for his or her age group is warranted. MDLL puts player safety and enjoyment first among the many factors when assigning players to teams and will work with parents/guardians to try to ensure the best possible experience for each player.

What happens at Player Assessments?

Mason District Little League uses a player assessment process to determine eligibility and skill level.

When the player arrives at the assessment session, they will be directed to the registration table. Only players who are paid registrants will be allowed to participate. The players will all be given an identification number to attach to the front of their shirt, a picture is taken, and then directed to the warm-up area.

In the warm-up area, the players should stretch and pick a partner to throw a ball with and loosen their arms. When the managers and coaches are ready, they will be instructed on where to wait for their turn.

Each player will in turn be evaluated on the following:

1. Running
2. Throwing
3. Catching fly balls

4. Long throw after catching the fly balls
5. Fielding ground balls
6. Batting
7. Pitching/Catching (in interested in being considered for those positions)

Each player rotates through positions 1 through 6 above until all players have had their opportunity. Typically, this will be done by age group.

During each activity the managers from each division evaluate the players. Each manager has his own style and preference, but they are all evaluating skills, results, effort, and attitude.

For example, the player who catches every ball, hits the target on every throw, and smashes his batting practice may score low if he also pushes the other players, doesn't follow instructions, and displays a bad attitude. Conversely, the player who drops every ball, but chases them down like the game depends on it, will likely score higher than you might think.

After the assessments have been completed, the managers will apply their own 'science' to ranking the players and develop a list of players they would like to draft for their teams. Obviously, because it is a draft, they may not get all of the players they want.

An important factor to keep in mind is that Managers are encouraged NOT to draft based on previous teams in Minor divisions or "neighborhood" teams that they have had for several seasons. Although this may seem like it would be fun for the players who have played together since T-ball (for example), rarely have "neighborhood" teams fared well during the season because the level of play in AAA and Majors is much greater and competition a little more serious. In past cases, Managers who have made it a priority to keep a "neighborhood" team together regardless of skill levels have found it tough to keep the team motivated because many of the more advanced players were drafted first by other teams and they end up losing the vast majority of their games. Likewise, the one or two more advanced players that may be drafted onto the "neighborhood" team get frustrated at the level of play of their teammates and tend to lose interest. Moreover, history indicates that these players' skills also lessen by the end of the season because they have not been challenged.

I volunteered to manage or coach a team. Does my child need to attend the Player Assessment?

Yes. During the draft, Managers are not only assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their team as they think about each player, but also are assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the other teams in the Division. Consequently, it is important that they see every player during assessment, regardless of whether they know that Joe will be drafted onto Joe's Dad's team. Likewise, managers select coaches after the draft, so there is no specific assurance that because a manager and coach have been together for several seasons that this will survive the draft. For example, if a player has practiced over the winter and has developed into a solid catcher, a Manager who knows he really needs a catcher may draft that player in one of the first rounds, regardless of whether that player's father has coached with another manager for several seasons. Of course, at the end of the draft the Managers and Player Agent will discuss any potential trades, etc., but a Manager is not obligated to trade (especially if the driving factor is a coach, not a player). As a small league, MDLL has historically managed these situations equitably, but, again, there are no specific assurances.