



## Thunderbird Little League All Stars Policy

Most people are aware of the Little League World Series which is held in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. This annual event is widely advertised and televised, and represents the ultimate climax of the Little League season. At the same time, most players and families are not aware of the events leading up to the Little League World Series, which starts with All Stars.

At the conclusion of the regular season, Little League provides players with the opportunity to participate in postseason tournaments. This opportunity is commonly known as All Stars. While the Little League World Series is the culmination of the All Star tournament at the Majors (11 & 12 year old) level, there are All Star tournaments for many ages starting at ages 9 and 10. As of 2014:

Age Level	District Tournament	State Tournament	Regional Tournament	World Series
9 & 10 years old	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A
10 & 11 years old	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A
11 & 12 years old	Yes	Yes	San Bernardino, CA	Williamsport, PA
Intermediate 50/70	Yes	Yes	Yes	Livermore, CA
Juniors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Taylor, MI
Seniors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Bangor, ME
Big League	Yes	Yes	Yes	Easley, SC

Though the locations of these tournaments listed above are for baseball, Little League also has All Star tournaments for softball, at all the same ages/divisions with the exception of Intermediate 50/70. In fact, the Juniors Softball World Series takes place right in our back yard, in Kirkland, WA. Bellevue Thunderbird Little League has sent two teams to this international event over the past decade.

In the opinion of Bellevue Thunderbird Little League (the "League"), participating in Little League provides a unique opportunity for highly skilled players to play with friends from their community, develop as peer leaders and learn empathy for others in a team-focused environment. At the end of the season, All Stars then offers the chance for these players to play the youth game at the very highest level available, with the Little League World Series at the Majors level being perhaps the pinnacle of all youth tournaments.

Little League has strict rules around the timing of All Stars. All Star teams may not be announced, and neither tryouts nor practices may begin before the earlier of June 15 or 14 days before the start of the local tournament. For example, in 2015, the Little League (11 & 12 year olds) softball tournament will

begin on June 13, so teams may be announced and tryouts or practices may begin on May 30. The Little League baseball tournament, on the other hand, begins July 4, so teams may be announced and practices may begin June 15 (note in this circumstance the Little League baseball All Star team will actually have nearly 3 weeks to practice before the tournament begins).

The League will strictly adhere to these guidelines, and begin tryouts for teams at the various levels on the earliest allowable date. As the Little League rule is clear that it is *teams* which may not be announced prior to a certain date, Thunderbird *may* announce the pools of All Star candidates at each level before the earliest start date in an effort to help families plan their schedules around tryouts.

It is the intent of Bellevue Thunderbird Little League to assemble the most competitive team possible at each level for that year's All Star season. While it is generally clear at the upper levels (Intermediates and above) which players are eligible for which teams, at the 3 youngest levels (9/10, 10/11 and 11/12) there exists overlap of both age and playing division, and so a player's eligibility for and selection to an All Star tournament team will be determined by the following policy:

1. As of the 2015 season, this policy supersedes any other previously written procedure or policy relating to Bellevue Thunderbird All Stars.
2. In order to be eligible to participate in All Stars:
  - A player must have been on the roster of a regular season team within our League in an All Star eligible division
  - The player must have played in 60% or more of regular season games
  - The player must qualify under the Little League residency rules, which means that he or she must either live within our boundary, attend school within our boundary, or have a valid Regulation II(d) or Regulation IV(h) waiver on file with the League
  - Parents will be required to provide proof of residency, school enrollment or applicable waiver before a player may be selected to an All Star team
  - An ORIGINAL birth certificate will be required as proof of age
3. Prior to the end of regular season games, parents will be asked to submit an All Star eligibility and commitment letter to the League, indicating desire to be considered for All Stars and commitment to the anticipated timeline through the State tournament.
4. During the end-of-season league tournament, the Player Agent will distribute ballots to the players, manager and coach of each regular season baseball team to vote for eligible players for the 9/10, 10/11 and 11/12 year old baseball All Stars. Due to lower annual registration numbers, the Thunderbird softball program will use a tryout process based on players who wish to participate to determine All Star teams at each level rather than voting. Therefore, references below to All Star voting apply only to baseball divisions at this time. If and when softball registration numbers warrant it, the voting procedures below will apply to softball as well as baseball. Eligibility for All Star tournament teams and voting for All Star player pools will be determined using the following structure:

- 9 & 10 year olds playing AAA baseball will not be eligible for All Star teams and will not participate in All Star voting
  - 9 & 10 year olds playing AAA softball will be eligible for the 9 & 10 year old softball All Star team
  - 9 & 10 year olds playing Coast will be eligible for the 9 & 10 year old All Star team, and will vote for 9, 10 and 11 year old All Star players who played in the Coast division
  - 10 year olds playing Majors will be eligible for the 9 & 10 year old or 10 & 11 year old All Star team, and will vote for 10 , 11 and 12 year old All Star players who played in the Majors division
  - 11 year olds playing Coast will be eligible for the 10 & 11 year old All Star team, and will vote for 9, 10 and 11 year old All Star players who played in the Coast division
  - 11 year olds playing Majors will be eligible for the 10 & 11 year old or 11 & 12 year old All Star team, and will vote for 10, 11 and 12 year old All Star players who played in the Majors division
  - 12 year olds playing Majors will be eligible for the 11 & 12 year old All Star team, and will vote for 10, 11 and 12 year old All Star players who played in the Majors division
  - Players may vote for up to 12 players on their ballots
  - One manager and one coach per regular season team will be allowed to vote for up to 12 players each on their ballots, in the division in which they managed or coached
5. The division VPs will be responsible for nominating managers for the All Star teams. Generally the Coast division VP will nominate a manager for the 9 & 10 year old team and the Majors division VP will nominate a manager for the 10 & 11 year old team and the 11 & 12 year old team. Because of likely overlap between divisions for the 10 & 11 year old team, it may be necessary and prudent for the Coast and Majors VPs to collaborate on a manager nomination. Similar coordination may be necessary for between the Intermediates, Juniors, Seniors and Big League teams depending on where a player was rostered and his/her League age. Manager nominations will be presented to the board of directors for any discussion and approval. All Star managers must have been approved regular season managers or coaches for the division(s) represented by the All Star team he or she is managing, or as otherwise allowed under the Little League tournament rules.
  6. Once a manager is approved, he or she may nominate up to two coaches to assist. As with the rules for the manager, coaches must have been approved regular season managers or coaches for the division(s) represented by the All Star team he or she is coaching, or as otherwise allowed under the Little League tournament rules. While generally the League will allow an All Star manager to select his or her own coaches, the board of directors reserves the right to deny a coach request, and if such a situation occurs, will provide reasoning to the All Star manager.
  7. The Player Agent will tabulate the ballots and present the results to a committee comprising the League President, Player Agent, division VPs and division managers of regular season teams for discussion. Recognizing that player votes alone are not enough to effectively determine pools

of players to be considered for the All Star tournament teams, it is the function of this committee to analyze the player, manager and coach votes, discuss anomalies, and determine groups of players at each tournament team age/level who will be honored as our League All Stars.

8. Each pool of players will participate in tryouts run by the All Star manager, his coaches, and other registered Little League volunteers whom he or she deems necessary to an effective process. It will be at the discretion of the All Star manager as to the format and duration of the tryout session(s). Tryout results will be discussed between the manager and coaches, and a tournament team selected based on these results, taking into account both the individual skills of the players and the role(s) he or she will be playing on the team. The overall goal is to select the most competitive team possible, ensuring a balance of skill and effective teamwork. Announcement of the team will come from the All Star manager.
9. The Majors (11 & 12 year old) team manager will select the Majors team from eligible 12 year olds, and will have first choice of eligible 11 year olds. In order to be considered for the Majors team, an 11 year old must have played Majors during the regular season. As a guiding principal, an 11 year old player shall only be considered for the Majors team when he or she will be contributing to that team on a consistent and frequent basis, and not spending most of his or her time on the bench. Examples of solid reasons to select an 11 year old would include:
  - An 11-year old player is one of the best outfield options among available 11 and 12 year old players, and will spend many tournament game innings playing in the field
  - An 11 year old player excels comparatively as a pitcher
  - An 11 year old is an accomplished hitter who may not play significant innings in the field but would contribute to the team through frequent plate appearances.

However, if an 11-year old is being chosen to fill a 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> roster spot on the All Star team, and would likely see infrequent defensive time and one at-bat per game, that player would more appropriately be left available to the 10 & 11 year old team where he or she would likely receive much greater playing time and contribute at a higher level.

10. The 10 & 11 year old team manager will have first choice of eligible 10 year olds. In order to be considered for the 10 & 11 year old team, a 10 year old must have played Majors during the regular season. As in item (7), a 10 year old should only be considered for the 10 & 11 year old team when he or she will be contributing to that team on a consistent and frequent basis.
11. The 9 & 10 year old team manager will select from the best available players who are 9 & 10 years old. In order to be considered for the 9 & 10 year old baseball All Star team, a 9 year old baseball player must have played in the Coast division during the regular season.