



# Baseball Majors and AAA Divisions Changes & Guidelines Beginning Spring 2021

December 14, 2020

## What is changing for Majors & AAA Baseball?

Instead of assigning players to divisions based primarily on two-year age groupings, we are now implementing the additional flexibility in age groupings that is allowed by Little League International (LLI). By making this change, players will have more opportunity to play in the most appropriate division based on their baseball skills, interest level, and level of competitiveness. As a result, players will now be **eligible** to play in divisions as follows:

- League Age 10-12 are eligible for Majors
- League Age 8-11 are eligible for AAA

This means that league age 10-year olds and league age 8-year olds demonstrating exceptional baseball skills and personal maturity may have the opportunity to play at a higher level than what has been available to them in our previous two-year age grouping structure. This may include, for example, players who also play travel ball, have played on a summer CHLL tournament team, or are substantially more skilled than other players in their age group. It also means that 11-year olds will have increased flexibility about choosing to play in AAA rather than Majors without having to attend a Majors workout session as has been the case in past years. Parents of baseball playing siblings are strongly encouraged to make decisions about the most appropriate division to register a given child for irrespective of the division in which his/her sibling(s) will or may be playing.

## Why are these changes being made?

Our kid pitch divisions have been structured in two-year age groupings (e.g. league age 9- and 10-year olds in AAA and league age 11- and 12- year olds in Majors). This structure was designed so that players of similar age would play together, and as they started their Little League careers would progress through the different divisions over a number of years. It is anticipated that this two-year age grouping structure will continue to be the most appropriate in terms of skills development for most players.

The benefits of providing additional flexibility in the AAA and Majors age groups include improved player development and the provision of a higher quality and more appropriate level of play for our kid pitch divisions. This enables players who demonstrate strong baseball skills to play with others of similar skill, including older players. It also provides league age 11-year old players with limited baseball experience, who are still learning fundamental skills, or who do not feel ready for or interested in the more competitive environment of Majors to choose to play AAA as league age 11-year olds. Structuring the Majors and AAA divisions by skill instead of age will provide players the opportunity to not only excel on the field, but also to offer them more flexibility to grow as teammates and develop strong interpersonal skills at the most appropriate level of play. The CHLL Board of Directors believes that moving to skills-based divisions using the flexibility included in the structure created by LLI will yield long-term benefits for players, coaches and our league that would not be achievable under our current age-based division structure.

## How will players be assessed for Majors and AAA?

All players interested in playing at the Majors or AAA level are required to attend a workout session. Player assessments will be conducted by professional baseball coaches who are not CHLL managers or coaches. The independent assessments provided by these coaches will be used for the Majors and AAA drafts.

## How will the division size be determined?

At the close of registration, the CHLL Board of Directors and Division Commissioners will collaborate to determine how many teams the Majors and AAA division will have. We will first determine the maximum size of the Majors Division, then move to AAA. LLI requires that all Majors teams have the same number of players. For example, an 8 team Majors Division will allow for 96 players league aged 10-12 with 12 players per team. If there are 130 players eligible to be drafted onto a Majors team, all will be considered, with the 34 undrafted players automatically moved to AAA. In general, only league age 11-year olds

who have not previously played at the Majors level and league age 10-year olds will be moved to AAA.

AAA is not subject to the same requirement that all teams have the same number of players. However, CHLL tries to maintain team size parity and reasonable team sizes. For AAA, the target team size is 12 players. While a league age 8-year old may be qualified for the AAA draft and there may be space on a AAA roster, a manager is not obligated to draft a league age 8-year old player.

**How is a player's league age determined?**

League age is determined based on rules established by LLI. A player's league age can be determined at <https://www.chlldc.org/league-age>.

**What does this mean for my league age 12-year old?**

- All league age 12-year olds will register for the Majors Division.
- All league age 12-year olds will be required to participate in a pre-season Majors Division skills workout for the purpose of evaluating baseball skills abilities for the regular season draft.
- All league age 12-year olds will be drafted onto a Majors team, unless it is determined by the Majors Commissioner and/or CHLL Board of Directors that remaining in Majors presents a safety concern for the player. At such time, in consultation with the player's family, the player may be recommended for AAA.

**What does this mean for my league age 11-year old?**

- League age 11-year olds will have the option of registering for Majors or AAA. This decision should be based on an individual player's skill level and interest in playing at the more competitive Majors level.
- Players registering for Majors will be required to participate in a pre-season Majors Division skills workout for the purpose of evaluating baseball skills abilities for the regular season draft. Similarly, players registering for AAA will be required to participate in a pre-season AAA Division skills workout.
- Players registering for Majors generally will be eligible to be drafted onto a Majors team; however, any undrafted player will automatically be moved to the AAA Division. League age 11-year olds who have not previously played at the Majors level are NOT guaranteed a spot on a Majors team roster. A player may be qualified for the draft, but it is possible that the player may not be drafted. Team managers will assemble the strongest teams possible, which may mean that one or more league age 10-year old players are drafted ahead of league age 11-year old players.
- Any player who registers for AAA, or who registers for Majors and is not drafted, is guaranteed a spot on a AAA team.

**What does this mean for my league age 10-year old?**

- League age 10-year olds will have the option of registering for Majors or AAA. This decision should be based on an individual player's skill level, maturity, and interest in playing at the more competitive Majors level.
- Players registering for Majors will be required to participate in a pre-season Majors Division skills workout for the purpose of evaluating baseball skills abilities for the regular season draft. Similarly, players registering for AAA will be required to participate in a pre-season AAA Division skills workout.
- Players registering for Majors will be eligible to be drafted onto a Majors team if the player opts to attend a Majors skills workout and achieves a minimum qualifying workout score; however, any undrafted player will automatically be moved to the AAA Division. That is, league age 10-year olds are NOT guaranteed a spot on a Majors team roster. A player may be qualified for the draft, but it is possible that the player will not be drafted.
- Any player who registers for AAA, or who registers for Majors and is not drafted, is guaranteed a spot on a AAA team.

**What does this mean for my league age 9-year old?**

- All league age 9-year olds will register for the AAA Division.
- All league age 9-year olds will be required to participate in a pre-season AAA Division skills workout for the purpose of evaluating baseball skills abilities for the regular season draft.
- All league age 9-year olds will be drafted onto a AAA team.

**What does this mean for my league age 8-year old?**

- League age 8-year olds will have the option of registering for AAA or AA. This decision should be based on an individual player's skill level, maturity, and interest in playing kid pitch at the AAA level.
- Players registering for AAA will be required to participate in a pre-season Majors Division skills workout for the purpose of evaluating baseball skills abilities for the regular season draft. Similarly, players registering for AA will be required to participate in a pre-season AAA Division skills workout

- Players registering for AAA will be eligible to be drafted onto a AAA team provided space is available and the player achieves a minimum qualifying workout score; however, any undrafted player will automatically be moved to the AA Division. Managers are not required to draft league age 8-year olds to AAA teams.
- Any player who registers for AA, or who registers for AAA and is not drafted, is guaranteed a spot on a AA team.

**What does this mean for my league age 7-year old?**

- No change from the current CHLL division structure.
- All league age 7-year olds will register for the AA Division.
- All league age 7-year olds will be required to participate in a pre-season AA Division skills workout for the purpose of evaluating baseball skills abilities for the regular season team selection.
- All league age 7-year olds will be placed onto a AA team.

**What does this mean for my league age 6-year old?**

- No change from the current CHLL division structure.
- All league age 6-year olds will register for the Single A Division.
- All league age 6-year olds will be placed onto a Single A team.

**What does this mean for my league age 5-year old?**

- No change from the current CHLL division structure.
- All league age 5-year olds will register for the Single A Division.
- All league age 5-year olds will be placed onto a Single A team.

**What does this mean for siblings?**

Each player should play in the division that is most appropriate given the player's age, skill level, and maturity. While it may be convenient for a family to have multiple siblings of different ages on the same team, this may not be in the best interest of a player's development. Younger siblings should not be pushed to play in a higher division if they are not ready for the challenge. Similarly, older siblings who are ready to move to a higher division should not be held back to play with a younger sibling. Appropriate player development rather than parental convenience should be the priority in determining the division in which a child should play.

**I want to manage/coach in Majors or AAA. What division will I be in?**

Volunteers with children playing in the league are traditionally assigned to coach on the same team with their child. Volunteers may request to coach on multiple teams if they have children playing in different divisions. For parents of league age 8-year old players registered for AAA and league age 10-year old players registered for Majors, those volunteers will not be assigned to a team until after the Board, in consultation with the division commissioners, has made a final decision on the division assignment for that player. Managers and coaches should not try to coach at a higher division level in order to bring their player up to that division. All managers and coaches must be approved by the Board.