



Tournament Team Play

Players league age 9 and up, interested in a higher level of play, have the opportunity to try-out for competitive, play-to-win, Tournament Teams. In some cases, players who are league age 8 may also try-out. Try-outs typically occur late May/early June, with the teams being announced in June.

Tournament teams participate in the District Tournament for their applicable age group typically in early to mid July each year. The winner of the district tournament goes on to represent the district at provincials in July each year.

The following Tournament Team opportunities are available at National in 2026:

| Program | League Age |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Minors Baseball | 9-10 yrs |
| Majors Baseball | 11-12 yrs |

Tournament Team Selection Process

The Tournament Team Selection Process applies to all National Little League (NLL) Tournament Teams, across both the Minor and Major divisions and associated age groups.

The selection process order is as follows:

1. Tournament Team Manager Selection
2. Interested players turn in signed Commitment Form & Player Code of Conduct
3. Open Try-outs
4. Teams are formed by the Manager, with oversight by the Selection Committee
5. Teams are announced
6. Assistant coaches are announced

Team Composition

The objective is to fairly and impartially select the most skilled and competitive teams possible for Tournament play.

Teams will consist of a maximum of 15 players, per Little League International rule. Most teams are comprised of between 11-13 players to ensure adequate playing time.

The Manager of each Tournament Team may determine the size of the team roster with due consideration to recommendations as provided by the NLL Board.



Manager Selection

All NLL House League Managers and Coaches rostered during the current season are eligible to apply for Tournament Team Manager positions.

NLL will provide notification when Tournament Team Manager applications are being accepted and the deadline for submitting applications. Tournament Team Manager Applications must be received prior to the deadline for consideration.

All applications will be reviewed by the Tournament Team Selection Committee. When selecting the Team Manager, consideration will be given to each candidate's knowledge of Little League tournament rules, coaching experience, coaching certifications, coaching style, and commitment to National.

The Selection Committee will be comprised of NLL President, Vice President, Player Agent, and Umpire in Chief. In the event of a conflict of interest, the committee member will be removed from the selection of the conflicting Manager's position. Each candidate will be invited to interview with the Tournament Team Selection Committee.

Following candidate interviews and discussion, the Tournament Team Selection Committee will recommend a Manager for each Tournament Team and bring their selections to the NLL Board of Directors for approval. The Tournament Team Manager may request early approval of any non-parent assistant coaches by the Selection Committee. No other parent coaches can be selected until after player selection has been completed.

Player Selection

All players currently registered for, and rostered to, a House League team, who meet catchment requirements, and have participated in a minimum of 60% of their team's games are eligible for consideration for NLL Tournament Teams.

If a player is interested in being a Tournament Team candidate, they must sign the Commitment Form and Player Code of Conduct and return it to NLL by the deadline. If the Commitment Form is not received by the try-out date, NLL reserves the right to remove the player from consideration for the Tournament Team. NLL will distribute the Tournament Team Commitment Form and Player Code of Conduct to all players.

PLAYER EVALUATION HAS 4 STEPS IN THE PROCESS:

1. Submission of a signed Tournament Team Commitment Form
2. Submission of a signed Player Code of Conduct form
3. Input from all House League managers & coaches in the division based on observations during practices and games throughout the regular season
4. Tournament Team tryout



THE BASIC PLAYER SELECTION CRITERIA CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING IDEALS:

- ◇ Sportsmanship and attitude (coachability)
- ◇ Skill level
- ◇ Team leadership
- ◇ Compete level
- ◇ Attitude, hustle, and team sprit

A committee member, and/or Player Agent will meet with each Tournament Team Manager to discuss roster, assistant coach selection and expectations for the competitive season.

Prior to the meeting:

- The Tournament Team Manager will submit their player selections to the Player Agent
- The Tournament Team Selection Committee will review player selection
- The Tournament Team Manager will be informed, in advance, of any player selections the Committee finds questionable and be afforded the time to justify their selections and/or prepare secondary selections.
- The Tournament Team Manager will prepare their selections for Assistant Coaches unless they are non-parent coaches and have been chosen and approved in advance of team selection.

During the meeting:

- If a player is deemed by the Selection Committee to be a questionable decision, the Tournament Team Manager will be asked to present the valuation/reasons for said player selection to the Selection Committee.
- The Tournament Team Manager will select Assistant Coaches. The Coaches selected must meet the approval of the selection committee.

After the meeting:

- Final approval of each team roster will rest with the Selection Committee.
- The Tournament Team Manager will be asked to inform any player not chosen during the final selection and to provide feedback and an explanation for the decision if requested prior to the official announcement of the roster.

Some Notes About Player Selection

In most cases only 12-14 players are chosen to represent an entire league. Many players will have the skill set to make the team however not all kids are able to be selected.

The following is also considered when selecting players to the Tournament Team:



- Do they exhibit proper sportsmanship?
- Do they get along with other players?
- Are they a leader on and off the field?
- Do they rally the players on the team when they are losing?
- Do they make other players around him/her play better because of their play?
- Are they willing to play a position other than their preferred one(s) for the sake of the team?
Versatility is desirable.

These factors are often missed from the spectator stands yet are factors of which team managers are extremely aware.

Often a player who puts the ball in play is preferred over a player who strikes out often but can hit further. Consistency is key.

Can they hit fast “All-Star type pitching”? The player might be able to hit slower house league pitching but be unlikely to hit the faster or more complex pitching that will be seen in All-Star tournaments.

A controversial issue can be that it seems the managers’ or coaches’ kids always seem to be selected. NLL does its best to ensure the best players are chosen regardless of who their parents are. Whether it is cause or affect, some of the best players are usually sons or daughters of managers and coaches. This could be due to the managers and coaches putting in more time with their own children or they got into coaching because they saw some ability in their child. It is a criticism that we are aware of and yet a result which we feel in most cases has justification.

Usually, the Manager uses their last few votes to choose players who may not have had the best statistics or power or pitching ability but rather were good TEAM players who hustled and had good attitudes. A team of All-Stars is not easy to coach and a couple of kids who hustle and have good team spirit can be instrumental in having fun during those long summer practices and in winning tournament games.

It is important that all our parents understand the focus of the process is to field a roster of 12-15 players who it is felt will result with the best team effort. If you son/daughter is successful in being chosen to represent NLL on a Tournament Team, please understand players will be put into positions that best suit their skills. This may not be a player’s favorite, or even a glamorous position, but it will be the one best suited to the player and to the needs and requirements of the team.

Please remember that we are trying to field the most competitive team we can that represents all players of NLL. It is not an easy process.



Prospect Group

Throughout the course of the winter and spring NLL holds additional training sessions for prospective tournament team players ("Prospect Group").

The purpose of these sessions are to provide prospective players with additional skills and interactions with players at a similar skill level so they can develop together as individuals and teammates.

NLL invites prospective players to these training sessions based on player interest and on recommendations from current coaches at each prospective level, the player agent, umpire in chief, and president.

Players who did not participate in these sessions are not excluded from trying out for the tournament team and are still eligible to participate in other winter clinic training opportunities offered by NLL.