

For the 2021 Tournament season, the definition of an at-bat in reference to Mandatory Play has been revised to state: **A player enters the batter's box with no count and completes that time at bat by being retired, retired as a batter-runner or runner, scores, or the inning or game ends.**

Below is the explanation of the rule, and answers to common questions about the rule, which is in place for all games played in this year's Little League Baseball® and Little League Softball® International Tournament.

Tournament Rule 9 (Mandatory Play) [Baseball, Softball]

Divisions: 8- to 10-Year Old Division Baseball and Softball, 9- to 11-Year-Old Division Baseball and Softball, Little League Baseball and Softball, Intermediate (50-70) Baseball Division, and Junior League Baseball and Softball.

Synopsis: A manager's failure/refusal to insert players into the line-up as outlined in the new rule shall result in immediate ejection of the manager and removal for the remainder of the International Tournament, without replacement. The umpire-in-chief or other individual designated by the game Tournament Director in consultation with the official scorekeeper, shall advise both team managers, at the appropriate time as outlined in the rule, of their obligation to insert all players who have not completed their mandatory play requirement.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: If the manager fails to comply with Tournament Rule 9, does the UIC, designated official, scorekeeper, or game Tournament Director stop the game and notify the regional office/Tournament Committee even without a protest by the opposing manager?

A: Yes. The game shall be stopped and the potential violation shall be referred to the Regional Office and the Tournament Committee even without a protest being filed by the opposing team.

Q: Does the game Tournament Director remove the manager if he/she fails to follow the Mandatory Play rule, or should he/she follow the chain of command to the Tournament Committee for a determination of whether to remove the manager?

A: Only the Tournament Committee in Williamsport, Pa., has the authority to remove the manager for not complying with Tournament Rule 9. If the Umpire-In-Chief (U.I.C.), designated official, scorekeeper, or game Tournament Director become aware of a potential violation, the game shall be stopped and the

matter shall be referred to the Regional Office who will inform the Tournament Committee and will provide direction to suspend and remove. The Little League International Tournament Committee in Williamsport will provide the final, official decision.

Q: If a team ONLY has two adults on the team affidavit, and the manager is removed for violation of the Mandatory Play rule, is the team allowed to add another adult to the affidavit?

A: The manager removed by action of the Tournament Committee may not be replaced. However, because the team did not originally appoint a second coach, it would be allowed to add an eligible coach to the team in the unfulfilled position, in accordance with Little League Tournament Rules and Guidelines.

Q: Is it the responsibility of the U.I.C., designated official, or game Tournament Director to verbalize to the managers prior to the game the penalty for violation of Tournament Rule 9?

A: The U.I.C., designated official, or game Tournament Director is to advise all managers, coaches, and umpires of the Tournament Rule 9 prior to the game. With that said, it is solely the manager's responsibility to adhere to the rule.

Q: If a manager attempts to replace a runner once reaching base safely, and that runner has not fulfilled the base running portion of the at-bat requirement, is this a violation of Mandatory Play?

A: No. A player removed prior to meeting the running portion of their Mandatory Play requirement will be treated as an improper substitute and would not be considered a violation. For the purposes of the Mandatory Play rule, an at-bat is defined as: a player enters the batter's box with no count and completes that time at-bat by being retired, retired as a batter-runner or runner, scores, or the inning or game ends.

Q: Must the violation of the Tournament Mandatory Play rule be deemed as "deliberate" for the manager removal penalty to apply?

A: All violations of Tournament Rule 9 are treated equally. However, the Little League International Tournament Committee reserves the right to impose additional penalties. However because the team did not originally appoint a second coach, it would be allowed to add an eligible coach to the team, in accordance with tournament guidelines governing the replacement of a player, manager, or coach.

Q: Can a starter be removed before fulfilling Mandatory Play under the running requirement? If the starter can fulfill the requirement at some time before the game is over, can that starter be removed before Mandatory Play since he/she can be reinserted?

A: The starter may not be removed defensively before meeting the At-Bat requirement, including the base running requirement. In order to comply with the Mandatory Play Rule the starting players must play six consecutive defensive outs and bat once. If they come to plate, and reach base, they may not be removed (for a substitute or a SPR) until the base running portion of the rule is fulfilled, regardless of re-entry capability.

Q. A player steps in for their one and only at-bat, to satisfy Mandatory Play, in the game, but before a pitch is delivered to the batter, a runner gets picked off ending the inning. Would this count as the official At Bat?

A. Since the inning/game ended on this pick off play this meets the Mandatory Play requirement. The definition of an At-Bat (Rule 2.00) states "... a batter assumes the position of batter (both feet in the batter's box and the ball is live) and is retired, retired as a batter-runner or runner, scores, or the inning or the game ends. Since the batter was in the box when the third out occurred via pick off, this satisfies the at bat portion of Mandatory Play.