

Explanation of Niceville-Valparaiso Little League Draft Procedures

Niceville-Valparaiso Little League (NVLL) follows the draft procedures outlined in the Little League Operating Manual. Since NVLL is actually composed of two leagues (American and National), there are several options available for dividing players among the two leagues. NVLL utilizes the common pool draft method, which means players are picked from a common pool and are not in a particular league until the teams are drafted. It is important to understand that the two leagues are as distinct as two other leagues, such as Destin and Shalimar. Waivers are submitted each year in order to govern the two leagues under one Board and interleague (play each other throughout the season). However, when it comes to drafting teams and forming All-Star teams, the separation of leagues is black and white.

In the **Minor League Divisions**, the draft is fairly straightforward. Managers draw out of a hat to determine draft position and team names. The draft “snakes” so that team #1 picks first in the first, third, fifth, etc. rounds and picks last in the second, fourth, sixth, etc. rounds. The American and National League teams must alternate picks. In odd years, the American League picks first while in even years, the National League picks first. For example, if there are eight teams (4 American and 4 National), in 2009 the draft order would be:

Round 1: A1-N1-A2-N2-A3-N3-A4-N4
Round 2: N4-A4-N3-A3-N2-A2-N1-A1
Round 3: (same as round 1)
Round 4: (same as round 2)

In 2010, the draft order would be:

Round 1: N1-A1-N2-A2-N3-A3-N4-A4
Round 2: A4-N4-A3-N3-A2-N2-A1-N1
Round 3: (same as round 1)
Round 4: (same as round 2)

There are NO provisions to protect players of coaches, sponsors, etc. If a manager wants a particular coach on his team, he must ensure he drafts that coach’s son. The manager’s son/daughter is placed on his team in the fifth round of the draft. Siblings of any player picked are automatically placed on the same team in the next round.

In the **Major League Division**, the same basic principles apply, but there are additional rules that make it more complicated. Rather than drawing out of a hat for draft position, the draft order is determined by the regular season standings from the previous year. The American League still picks first in odd years and the National League picks first in even years. Therefore, in odd years, the American League team with the worst record in the previous year picks first and the National League team with the worst record picks

second. This draft order is maintained in each round of the draft (no snaking). For 2009, the draft order is:

All rounds: Red Sox-Astros-Yankees-Reds-Mariners-Dodgers-Orioles-Braves-Cubs

The Little League Operating Manual states, “*Duration of Title: Each player acquired shall, for the duration of the major Little League career, be the property of the team making the acquisition, unless subsequently traded or released.*” In most cases, a player is drafted onto a team as an 11-yr old and remains on that team for two years. The manager may or may not return to that team, but the players stay together for two years. Some teams will have more returning players than others. When their team is full, they simply stop picking in the draft. No team can have more than eight 12-yr olds on the team. Therefore, it is advised that they pick no more than eight 11-yr olds, although this is not always possible. If a team has more than eight returning 12-yr olds, the Player Agent will force a trade to ensure every team is under the eight player limit.

Manager’s sons are picked in rounds 3, 4, or 5, depending on their league age. Siblings are picked in the next round just like in the Minors.

The distinction between the American and National Leagues is even more apparent in the Majors, since a player remains on his team for two years. Although there are some exceptions why a player could change teams, under no circumstances can he change leagues. There is a common misconception that players can “reenter the draft” at their own will. A player can be released due to injury, illness, relocation or resignation, but the manager must release the player in order to reenter the draft. Most managers will not do this unless there are extenuating circumstances, because it’s not in the best interests of his team to lose a returning 12-yr old. If the player is released, or is traded, he must remain in his league (American/National).

If the number of teams in the Majors increases, there are procedures in the Little League Operating Manual that must be followed for the expansion. If the number of teams in the Majors decreases, one of the teams is dismantled and the returning players are drafted onto the remaining teams in that league, in a supplemental draft prior to the regular draft. Determining which team is dismantled is a Board decision, based on Player Agent recommendation. Usually, it’s apparent which team has the least chance of success, based on the number of returning players and that team should be dismantled.

The goal of the Player Agent and the Board of Directors is to ensure team parity as much as possible, while staying within the rules established by Little League International. Team parity promotes competition, which in turn, improves our players and provides a better chance of success in All-Stars. Lopsided teams or trying to “stack” one league or the other is unhealthy for the league and should be avoided. However, due to Little League’s draft rules, it is inevitable (almost foreseeable) that Major League teams that do well one year (due to the large number of 12-yr olds), do poorly the next because of the few number of returning players and late draft position.

The selection of **All-Star Teams** is determined by NVLL Local Rules, which are reviewed by Little League Southern Region. All-Star teams must be selected from the American League and National League teams separately. Little League “sanctions” All-Star tournaments for the following age groups:

Senior

Junior

11-12 (12-yr old tournament)

10-11 (11-yr old tournament)

9-10 (10-yr old tournament)

The 10- and 11-yr old tournaments can go to the State level. The Junior and Senior tournaments go to the National level, and the 12-yr old tournament goes to the International level (televised on TV).

The District provides non-sanctioned tournaments for the following age groups:

8-9 (9-yr old tournament)

7-8 (8-yr old tournament)

Those tournaments only play at the District level.

Since NVLL has two leagues, we field two teams (American/National) in each age group. In certain age groups, such as Junior/Senior and softball, the number of teams is small enough that we are allowed to combine into one All-Star team. This requires another waiver that must be submitted to Southern Region for approval. The number of teams we have in our baseball Majors and Minors do not allow for combining these age groups into one All-Star team.

NVLL has a strong tradition of running a successful regular season, as well as fielding extremely competitive All-Star teams. In both cases, it's important to follow the applicable rules and regulations in order to maintain our Little League Charter and participation in All-Star Tournaments.