

Palo Alto Little League 2008 Majors / PCL Tryouts Overview 9- to 12-year-olds

KEY DATES, TIMES & PLACE

City Wide Draft

Starting this season, the PALL American and National League teams will not be restricted to draft within their own geographic boundary, which is divided by Oregon Expressway. Going forward, a player may be drafted into either league. Players participating in the post-season all-star tournaments will play on the team for their league.

Removing the boundary restriction facilitates scheduling balance by having the same number of teams in each league and better enabling competitive balance between the two leagues during regular season play.

CITY-WIDE TRYOUTS FOR MAJORS WILL BE ORGANIZED BY AGE

Any player who attends a tryout for Majors but is not selected by a Majors team will have met their requirement to attend a tryout for PCL. They do not need to attend an additional PCL-only tryout. Players trying out for Majors must attend at least two of the three tryout days.

Tryouts: Saturday, January 26 Majors (tryout would count for PCL)
Sunday, January 27 Majors (tryout would count for PCL)
Saturday, February 2 Majors (tryout would count for PCL)
Sunday, February 3 Majors (rain date)
Saturday, February 9 PCL only
Sunday, February 10 PCL only (rain date)
• *Players must attend at least two days to be considered for Majors; one day for*

PCL

MAJORS TRYOUTS (Jan 26, Jan 27 and Feb 2):

Times:	12-year-olds:	Registration: 8:30 am Tryouts: 9 am – 11:00 am
	11-year-olds:	Registration: 10:30 am Tryouts: 11:00 am to 1:00pm
	10-year-olds & 9-year-olds:	Registration: 12:30 am Tryouts: 1:00 pm to 2:30pm

PCL TRYOUTS (Feb 9 and Feb 10):

Players with last names starting with A thru M:	Registration: 8:15am Tryouts: 8:30am
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Players with last names starting with N thru Z:	Registration: 10:30am Tryouts: 10:30am
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Place: Middlefield Ball Park (3672 Middlefield Road)

Rain? We will hold tryouts in a light rain; if a downpour, please consult the Web site (www.pabaseball.org) for the latest update.

Notification: No later than Wednesday, February 13.

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FACT SHEET

This fact sheet has been created in order to give prospective players and parents an understanding of the Majors/PCL tryout process. Please read this document carefully as it explains how Palo Alto baseball is organized and how players are selected. It lays out our philosophy about the Majors and PCL, explains what is expected of the players and of the parents, as well as answers frequently asked questions parents and players often have at the start of the season.

PALO ALTO OPERATES TWO SEPARATE BASEBALL LEAGUES:

Because of the size of the Palo Alto community, Palo Alto Little League actually operates as two separate leagues with one common board of directors. The Board usually meets on the third Tuesday of every month at the Middlefield Clubhouse.

PLAYER AGENTS:

The person in charge of each division is called the Player Agent. There is a Player Agent for Majors National, Majors American, PCL National and PCL American. The four of us work closely together with the Board to coordinate league policies and parent and player expectations. Player agents and contact information are as follows:

Palo Alto National:

Majors: Jeff Scheel (agent_majors_n@pabaseball.org)

PCL: Mark Priestley (agent_pcl_n@pabaseball.org)

Palo Alto American:

Majors: Austin Erlich (agent_majors_s@pabaseball.org)

PCL: TBD (agent_pcl_s@pabaseball.org)

MAJORS V. PACIFIC COAST LEAGUE (PCL):

Palo Alto Little League has many levels of play for players ages 9 to 12:

Coach Pitch: For 7- and 8-year-old players. (6-year-olds can play via tryout)

Pitch Machine: For 9- and 10-year-old players (8-year-olds can play via tryouts).

PCL: For 11-year-old players, (9s and 10s via skill evaluation tryout).

Majors: For 9- to 12-year-olds, via skill evaluation and draft only

Majors and Pacific Coast League (PCL) are the more competitive divisions. 12-year-olds *automatically* get assigned to Majors if they attend at least 2 tryouts. 11-year-olds *automatically* get assigned to PCL *unless* they have tried out twice *and* have been drafted onto a Majors team. 9- and 10-year-olds *automatically* get assigned to Pitching Machine *unless* they have tried out and have been assigned or drafted onto PCL or Majors teams.

To be eligible for Majors, players have to go through at least two days of skills evaluation “tryouts.”

To be eligible for PCL, players have to go through only *one* day of skills evaluation.

Skill evaluations require players to demonstrate their ability to run the bases, throw a baseball, field ground balls, catch fly balls, and hit a pitched ball. Player agents, managers and coaches observe and rate each youngster in an effort to assess ability and experience and to determine at which level the youngster should play.

Players are then “drafted” from the pool of eligible players, onto the Majors teams by the individual team managers, and retain their roster slot with the same Majors team for the duration of their Little League playing career.

11 -year-olds who are *not* drafted will *automatically* get assigned to a PCL team. 9- and 10-year-old players not selected *may or may not* get assigned to a PCL team, depending on skill level and space availability, though any 10-year-old who previously played PCL as a 9- will *automatically* get assigned to PCL. PCL player agent wants all kids interested in PCL to attend tryouts even if they were in PCL the previous year, to help him evaluate all kids for team balancing. Parents will be notified no later than Wednesday, February 13 as to the status of their child’s tryout. PCL team assignments will be announced at a parent meeting in March.

We recognize there is a lot of stress surrounding these skill evaluations. Many parents and their children want or expect to play at the highest level available, and are understandably disappointed when they don’t make it. However, players progress at different rates. Thus, we strive to provide a playing environment that is appropriate for everyone and is as inclusive as possible.

12s Playing Majors

Little League International, our governing body, has ruled that 12-year-olds can elect to play in the Majors division. They must still attend tryouts in order to be selected.

Palo Alto Little League believes that kids are best served by playing with others at a similar skill level, especially at the PCL and Majors levels. In 2007, PALL instituted an evaluation system for the Majors tryouts in order to increase the chances that players with the best skills would be selected, regardless of their age.

In 2008, we will continue the evaluation system in order to assist parents in determining the appropriate level for their child. After tryouts and before the draft, we will contact parents whose children tried out for Majors but may be best served by the PCL division. We will provide quantitative information about their child’s skill level as evaluated by the Majors Managers and Player Agents (This information is considered confidential, and we will only tell you your child’s level, and not others.) Although the final decision is that of a player and his/her parents, we feel that this information will provide an indication of the type of experience your child should expect at each level.

Majors or PCL? Helping parents decide.

Regardless of skill level, players in Majors are expected to be committed to baseball. There will be at least 4 days of activity per week, with each session lasting at least 2 hours. Majors players are expected to play only baseball and not a second sport. Players with relatively lower skills will often play the minimum, which is one time at bat and two innings in the field per game.

Both PCL and Majors divisions play two games per week.

In 2008, we will continue our efforts to improve the PCL experience, focusing our player training efforts at this level. PCL has the same minimum playing rule as Majors (2 innings plus 1 at bat). By the rules of International Little League, 12-year-olds are not allowed to pitch in PCL. The PCL time commitment can be as much as 4 days per week, but in general there is more flexibility at this level.

Expansion

The International Little League rules stipulate that each team can have a maximum number of eight (8) 12-year-olds. Due to the fact that 12-year-olds can now elect to play Majors, PALL expects to have more 12-year-olds in the league, and thus will likely need to expand the number of teams. There are currently 12 Majors teams; our current projection is to expand to 14 teams.

Players currently on Majors teams will remain with their teams, and not be drafted onto an expansion team. The expansion method that will be used is detailed in the Little League Operating Manual. In this method, the two expansion teams will take turns selecting players until each of their rosters has ten (10) players. They will do this before the returning teams select any players. The draft then proceeds as normal until each team fills up its roster.

MAJORS TEAMS BY DIVISION:

Palo Alto American

Hengehold

Lions

LPM

Palo Alto Venture Partners

Sportshop

Expansion Team (1)

Expansion Team (2)

Palo Alto National

Alhouse

Bike Connection

Edwards Luggage

Pasco

Stanford Electric

Tickets Express

Palo Alto Masonic Lodge

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

How many teams are you adding to Majors this year?

Due to the influx of 12-yr-olds into the league, we expect to add two (2) expansion teams: They will both play in the American League, so that each league will have seven (7) teams.

How does the draft work?

Majors: Managers draft players in reverse order of finish (based on last year's results). They each select the # of players required to bring their team to 12 players each. When a new team is created, that team's manager drafts first and gets a pre-determined number of consecutive draft picks. This year the two expansion team managers will alternate their selections until they have rosters of 10 players each. Then, the draft by other teams will continue from that point in the order noted above.

PCL: The Player Agents form the teams, taking into account a) availability of Managers, b) skill level so that the teams are competitively balanced, and c) schools to the extent of trying to make sure each player has at least one or two schoolmates if possible.

What skills are you looking for?

Players will be evaluated for throwing, arm strength, fielding, catching flies, running bases and hitting a pitched ball. In addition, managers tend to notice attitude, confidence level and intangibles – does the player run to his position and look ready and eager to play? Is the player paying attention? Did the player come dressed to play baseball? In short, managers care less about whether a player actually catches a fly ball (though important) than how they looked preparing to catch it (even more important).

Why are pitching skills not taken into consideration for Majors draft?

The skills evaluation is designed to show basic arm strength and throwing technique – both of which are fundamental to pitching. Most managers feel pitchers need to be developed and usually train them specifically for that skill.

Do I have to go where I'm drafted?

Yes.

What is the likelihood of my child getting drafted to Majors?

All players registering will get to play baseball, though not all will play in Majors. The chances of making Majors vary from year to year, and are based on skill levels, demographics, etc...

How many 9-year-olds are selected for PCL or typically drafted each year to Majors?

Historically, very few 9-year-olds make PCL and fewer still make Majors.

Should my 9- or 10-year-old try-out for PCL-only?

We believe as many kids as possible should tryout for Majors. There is still value to the experience if a child tries out for Majors and is not drafted. However, many parents and players know they only want to play in PCL, if given the chance. They are welcome to tryout for PCL only.

How are managers and coaches selected for PCL and Majors?

In PCL, the player agents select the managers. Volunteer forms, tryouts, word-of-mouth and previous associations all are factors in finding managers. Then, they look for baseball knowledge, an ability to teach, availability of hours and an understanding of what it means to be a volunteer and leader. Player agents also try to spread out individuals known to want to assist by coaching.

In Majors, the player agents, along with the Board President, select the managers, subject to a vote approval by the Board. Coaches are also voted on. A similar criterion is used as with PCL, though a higher level of baseball experience is expected, and a previous association with the team may also factor in the selection. While most managers have children on their teams, not all do nor is that a requirement. Like everyone involved with Palo Alto Little League, all managers are volunteers.

All managers are nominated by the League President and approved by the Board.

Why don't you re-draft all teams each year?

This has been discussed in the past at PALL Board meetings and at the national level, but has not been adopted.

Why do players stay with the same team and managers in Majors?

Little League International allows four specific methods for drafting players. One is the current PALL policy, where players remain on the same team the following year. This provides a sense of community amongst the players and parents, and enables Managers to develop players on a multi-year basis.

One of the other options requires that that all players return to the draft pool. First all the returning players are drafted, then all prospective players who have gone through the skills evaluations are drafted. Returning Majors players are guaranteed a spot in Majors again, but not necessarily with the same team.

Why don't you split Majors and PCL by age? For instance, 11/12s in Majors, 9/10s in PCL?

We've found that skill evaluations are a much better way to ensure that players play in the appropriate league. Age is not the strongest indicator of skill level.

How much playing time can my child expect?

The minimum playing rules are that each player bats at least one time per game and plays two innings in the field. Any additional playing time is at the manager's discretion.

What baseball age is my child?

Whatever your child's age is as of April 30, 2007 determines your child's baseball age. For instance, a player born April 29, 1997 would be considered a Little League 10 this year; whereas a player born May 2, 1997 would be considered a Little League 9. Any child born after April 30, 1998, is not eligible for Majors or PCL.

A full age chart can be found here: <http://www.littleleague.org/common/forms/AgeChartBB.pdf>

How come my 12-year-old can't pitch in PCL?

This is a rule at the International Little League level, and cannot be changed by PALL. The thinking behind the rule is that younger players who are not at the Majors skill level should not have to bat against 12-year-olds, due to safety considerations.

What's this I hear about a pitch count?

The national Little League organization has instituted a pitch count program, that changed the way a player's pitching eligibility was managed. Under that program, managers and scorekeepers count the specific number of pitches thrown by a player. Under the previous rule, a player's pitching eligibility was based on the number of innings pitched.

These rules are now mandatory for every league playing under Little League rules.

What is the sibling option rule for Majors?

This rule allows a manager to declare before the draft begins that he will use one of his available picks to take the sibling of a player currently on his team. There is a similar option for managers and their children.

My child can't make Saturday (or Sunday) tryouts because of religious commitments. What are my options?

Please contact the appropriate player agent. However, for Majors, players need only to attend two tryouts and for PCL-only, they need only to attend one.

CHANGES FOR 2008

Player Selection Changes:

What is changing?

12-year-olds now default to majors if they attend at least 2 tryouts.

Why was this change made?

This is a new rule at the International Little League level.

Possible League Size Change

The league is looking at expanding by 2 teams at the Majors level to accommodate the large number of 12-year-olds that will be entering Majors this year.