



# SOUTHBRIDGE LITTLE LEAGUE



www.southbridgellittleleague.com

Southbridge Little League Newsletter

November 2010

## FREE SWINGS AT EXTRA INNINGS AUBURN

## Registration set for December 7

SOUTHBRIDGE — The turkey is gone, the stockings are ready to be hung, and baseball is right around the corner.

The first player registration for the 2011 Southbridge Little League season will be held on Tuesday, December 7 from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the community room of the Southbridge Police Department on Mechanic Street.

While the price tags on just about everything in life seems to be on the rise, the cost to sign-up your child for Little League is the same as it was last year. The Board of Directors elected not to increase rates for any division. Players in the Tee Ball and Minor (Coach Pitch) divisions pay \$40, AA is \$50, AAA is \$60, Majors is \$65, the Junior and Senior League divisions are \$115, and the Big League division is set at \$125. The \$200 family cap remains in place, as well as the \$10 discount for additional children.

TURN TO REGISTRATION, PAGE 2



Southbridge Little League file photos

Extra Innings Auburn has again extended the opportunity to Southbridge Little League players to come down to their facilities on Southbridge Street for **FREE** on Sunday, December 5, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. This opportunity is completely free to all Southbridge Little League players.

## Little League plans to offer girls softball divisions in 2011



SOUTHBRIDGE — Calling all girls: the Southbridge Little League wants you!

For the first time in the league's history, plans are being put together for a girls softball division for 2011.

After several years of requests from parents, the league will offer girls softball, assuming enough players and volunteers sign-up and get involved.

Other Little League programs in District 5 that offer softball include

Dudley, Northborough, Shrewsbury, Southborough, Spencer, and Westboro. The Southbridge Little League will be relying on the experiences and feedback of these other leagues in preparing for the 2011 softball season, as well as those locally who have experience in softball leagues.

If you're interested in helping out in any way with setting up our first softball season, contact a member of the Board of Directors.

# December registration scheduled, rates same as last season

## REGISTRATION

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The league recognizes that Christmas is coming up, the first snow storm of the season hasn't hit us yet, and baseball may seem pretty far away, but the season is rapidly approaching and early registrations are important for the league to prepare for the upcoming season.

During early sign-ups, the league always gets some feedback that we're the only ones doing registrations so early. In fact, other leagues

in District 5 that have already started sign-ups for the 2011 season include Auburn, Charlton, Grafton, Leicester, Northborough, Shrewsbury, Sturbridge, and Westboro.

One advantage to you, the parents and guardians of the players, in signing up early is the financial flexibility it provides. The league understands the economy is rough, and sometimes we live paycheck-to-paycheck. For those who want to use it, the league provides a payment

plan where a down payment is made, and money is paid in installments to pay the rest of the balance. By signing up in December, rather than, say, late January, it allows the rest of December, and all of January, February, and March to pay the balance, rather than just eight weeks or so. With payment plans, a small down payment is required and the balance must be paid in order to get the player uniform, march in the Opening Day parade, and/or play in games.

Division	Fee
Tee Ball	\$40
Minor Division	\$40
AA Division	\$50
AAA Division	\$60
Major Division	\$65
Junior League	\$115
Senior League	\$115
Big League	\$125

# Two-time Olympian softball pitcher on using legs when pitching



Michele Smith, a two-time Olympic softball star pitcher, delivers a pitch. As she states in her article, her leg is raised up to hip level. Smith has two Olympic gold medals and is a member of the ASA Softball Hall of Fame. She can be followed on Twitter at MicheleSmith32.

**By Michele Smith**

*Two-time Olympic champion*

As women, the strongest part of our bodies is our legs. Therefore if we want to use our bodies to the fullest of our abilities, we need to use our legs properly when pitching. Leg drive off the pitching rubber is one of the most important parts of the "start" of the pitching motion. The more you use your legs, the more energy and power you will be able to put into the pitch. Let's take a little time and go over some points to help you use your legs more when pitching.

The start of the pitch is called the "pre-motion." The pre-motion takes place while both feet are on the rubber. During the pre-motion we use our legs to shift our

weight from our front leg to our back leg, and then back to our front leg. When we bring our weight to our front leg the final time, we are in a "loaded" position and ready to "explode" off the pitching rubber.

This loaded position will help us to drive forward, and have a long and explosive leg drive off the rubber.

From the loaded position, our front leg is pushing and driving off the rubber. The back leg is striding out toward home plate on a straight line.

This straight line off the pitching rubber toward home plate is also called our "straight line of force" or our "power line."

As the back leg strides out on the power line, the knee should be raised as the leg drives off the back of the

rubber.

Try to imagine an imaginary box in front of the rubber that your leg has to stride over. This will help you explode off the rubber, and keep you from "walking" off the rubber. Drive hard with the front leg, and stride out strong with the back leg.

Remember the leg drive is very important; it needs to be long and explosive. But, in order for it to be correct and effective, the stride needs to land on the "power line" with the foot hitting the ground at a 45-degree angle. Striding "across" the power line or "too open" to the power line will take energy away from the pitch. Good Luck with your pitching and remember to "drive hard!"



# Baseball, umpiring myths cleared up by Little League

**Myth: The pitch hit the ground before the batter hit it. The ball is dead.** If a pitch touches the ground before entering the strike zone and is not swung at, it's called a ball. If it bounces up and hits the batter, the batter is awarded first base. If it is hit, it is ruled like a normal pitch; safe or out.

# Southbridge Little League adopts new zero tolerance policy

SOUTHBRIDGE — As has been seen nationally, there is a growing need for youth sports leagues to put in place tough zero tolerance policies to prevent the brawls, fights, and incidents seen in every sport in every corner of the country.

Far too often, parents and coaches act inappropriately and set a bad example for the players on the field, and the kids in the stands. In one such example locally, it was noted by many that the 10-, 11-, and 12-year-old players on the field have acted with more maturity than some coaches

and spectators.

With the in mind, one of the first actions of the Southbridge Little League's new Board of Directors was to adopt a new zero tolerance policy that is much stronger and more clearly defined than previous policies and statements. The policy was adopted from the Grafton Little League's policy.

The policy can be found on the league's Web site — [southbridgelittleleague.com](http://southbridgelittleleague.com).

The policy tackles "a wide range of unsportsmanlike actions, language, gestures and/or conduct directed from

one person to another, or a group of people, including but not limited to: unsolicited physical contact which would constitute assault under state law; profanity or verbal abuse directed towards any coach, player, umpire, official, spectator, or any other participant; behavior, conduct, or language that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for an individual or group.

The policy, as adapted from the Grafton Little League, replaces the league's Conduct

Committee with a Review Committee that is made up of the league President, Vice President, Player Agent, Umpire in Chief, and Coaching Coordinator. According to the policy, "the coach and/or person involved in the incident shall meet with the Review Committee within 24 hours of the incident," and that the committee's decision "shall be binding." Potential consequences include, but are not limited to, forfeit losses, game suspensions, outright bans, and teams being excluded from the playoffs.

[www.southbridgelittleleague.com](http://www.southbridgelittleleague.com)

Why not get a gift certificate for your little slugger this holiday season?

[www.southbridgelittleleague.com](http://www.southbridgelittleleague.com)

## Baseball, umpiring myths cleared up by Little League

**Myth: The batter backed out of the box as the pitch was coming to the plate. That's an automatic strike.** If the offense is stalling and the batter refuses to get into the box after the umpire tells them to do so, the umpire can call a strike on the batter without a pitch being made. However, if the batter is in the box and steps out during the wind-up or pitch, the umpire will call the pitch as they see it.



# Little League makes rule on composite bats for teen divisions

WILLIAMSPORT, Penn. — Little League has placed a moratorium on the use of composite bats in the Junior, Senior, and Big League Baseball Divisions of Little League, effective immediately.

At present, the moratorium on composite bats does not apply to the Little League Baseball (Majors) Division and below, nor does it apply to any division of softball.

The moratorium covers all games and practices only in the three divisions referenced above. It closely follows a similar moratorium approved in July 2010 by the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS), based on a recommendation from its Baseball Rules Committee. The NFHS Board enacted a rule to prohibit the use of composite bats until they can produce consistent compliance with the standards through the

life of the bat.

Waivers of the moratorium may be considered by Little League International in certain circumstances. For 2011, a manufacturer may apply for a waiver of the moratorium for a particular model of composite bat if all of the requirements for a waiver, as established by Little League International, are satisfied. Composite bats that are certified by an approved independent testing laboratory as meeting the current Ball Exit Speed Ratio (BESR), and the Accelerated Break-In (ABI) procedure, will be eligible for the waiver in 2011.

Little League International is contracting with the University of Massachusetts (Lowell) to begin research testing composite bats 2 ¼ barreled bats that are approved for play in Little League Baseball (Majors) Division and below using the Bat Performance Factor (BPF)

protocol, as well as the Accelerated Break-In (ABI) procedure. That a agreement was reached today, and testing will begin very soon.

“We wanted to get this information out as soon as possible,” Patrick W. Wilson, Vice President of Operations at Little League International, said. “Our intent is to provide local league constituents clear direction regarding composite bats, and which ones meet the standards for the Little League Baseball (Majors) 12-and-under divisions, if any, as soon as possible. We hope to have the results to you by January 1, 2011.”

Not covered under the Little League moratorium are wood bats, metal bats, or bats that have composite materials in the handle only. A composite bat is one that has a metal shell, but a woven composite of fibers on the inside of the barrel portion of the bat.

# Little League makes rule on composite bats for teen divisions

WILLIAMSPORT, Penn. — Little League International has made a number of rule changes for the 2011 season that affect the administration of leagues as well as the players and coaches on the baseball and softball diamond.

One rule change is the formal acceptance of league-age 4-year-olds in Tee Ball programs. Previously, such players were allowed with permission from Little League only.

In Little League’s continuing efforts to protect the arms of young pitchers, Regulation VI has been changed in regards to Junior and Senior League pitchers. The new rule prohibits players from pitching in more than one game in a day if they exceed 30 pitches in the first game. Players below the Junior League level are not allowed to pitch in multiple games per day, regardless of the number of pitches they may have thrown.

There is also a new rule in place in Regulation VI in regards to a player going from catcher to pitcher. Any player who has played the catcher position for four or more innings in a game is not eligible to pitch on that calendar day.

A big change in the Major division is that batters can now become a base runner on a dropped third strike, as is the case in Junior, Senior, and Big leagues. The new rule, 6.09, states that if a third strike called by the umpire is not caught, providing that first base is unoccupied or is occupied with two outs, the batter becomes a base runner. In that event, the defense must tag the batter/runner before (s)he reaches first base, or throw the ball to first for the put out as if the batter put the ball in play.

Another big change is that runners in the Major division may now leave the base when the pitcher releases the ball,

unless a local league adopts the old rule.

Designated hitters are now allowed in Senior League baseball and softball. The DH may be listed in the lineup to bat throughout the game for a designated player in the regular lineup. It is not a tenth batter in the lineup, but rather a player who only bats in the place of a player who only plays the field.

In Little League softball, the pitching distance has been increased from 40 feet to 43 feet for Senior and Big League. It remains at 40 feet for Little League and Junior League, and 35 feet for Minor League softball.

Also in softball, Little League International has altered the definition of a bunt, mandating that the umpire call a strike when the batter holds the bat in the strike zone when the pitch is delivered, even if the batter does not offer at the pitch.

## Baseball, umpiring myths cleared up by Little League

**Myth: The batter who batted out of order is out.** After the incorrect batter completes their at bat, and an appeal is made, the PROPER batter is out (the one who should have batted). The improper batter (the one who did bat) is removed from base and any advance made by runners because of their batted ball, is nullified. The next batter due up is the one who follows the PROPER batter. See rule 6.07.

