

Davis Little League Re-Draft Fact Sheet

The following is a synopsis of the significant and relevant factors behind the Davis Little League (DLL) Board of Directors decision to change how the Majors division drafts players. This document is being made available in an effort to provide clarity to this complicated and at times emotionally charged issue.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Davis Little League currently utilizes Option A of the Little League International rules related to the drafting of ball players to the Majors division. Option A allows for players to remain on the same team, once drafted, for their entire Majors career (approx. from age 10-12). Under Option A, only new players are drafted each year and all returning players remain on their original team. Once drafted, players are guaranteed a spot on that team until they age out of Little League.
- Little League International has an Option B, which is essentially an annual re-draft of all Majors division players. Option B requires that players who have previously been on a Majors team be put into an open re-draft pool. All these players are drafted onto Majors teams. A second tryout draft is then conducted to bring any new players that are eligible into any remaining slots on the Majors teams. No player is guaranteed a spot on a specific team from year to year, but once drafted all players are guaranteed a spot on one of the Majors teams until they age out of Little League.
- The Little League International Congress has been debating and discussing the pros and cons of Option A and B for the last several years. In April 2007 a motion was brought before the Little League Congress to eliminate Option A entirely, thus requiring all local leagues to operate their drafts by the Option B rules. The vote was 53% in favor of the change and 47% opposed. However, a super-majority of 66% was required for the vote to become ratified by the Little League Congress. Therefore, Option A and B remain available to local leagues.
- The Little League Congress acknowledges growing support across the country for the elimination of Option A and expects to bring the issue back again in the near future. Wide-spread rule changes have often been debated and voted on for several years before passing at the national level.
- All Little League programs in this area are in District 64 (Davis, Woodland, Dixon, Vacaville, Esparto, Winters, Travis, and Rio Vista). Currently Woodland, Esparto, Winters, Travis and Rio Vista operate under the Option B draft rules. Other cities are considering a move from Option A to B.
- DLL re-drafts for Fall Ball, which has reaped positive results for the league, as Fall Ball continues to increase in player participation annually.

CURRENT STATUS:

The DLL Board of Directors has a responsibility to provide for the best player experience possible. As a part of the process of determining how to maximize the positive player experience for every child, the DLL Board has discussed, debated and approved a local rule change from drafting under Option A to Option B for the 2008 season. This change will impact only Majors division teams. The main issues under consideration by the DLL Board were:

PROS:

1. Achieving the DLL goal of maintaining equitable teams from year to year; increasing the chance of every player to be drafted onto a team that is balanced with players of varying skill levels and has the opportunity to be competitive.
2. The learning/skill building opportunities afforded to players who have the chance to work with/be coached by different managers who all have different skill-sets and strengths to share with each player.
3. Achieving the DLL goal that kids remain engaged and excited about LL through their entire LL career (age 12), thus reducing the number of players who chose not to return and drop out of the league before age 12 due to negative experiences on a particular team or with a particular manager/coach.
4. The need for DLL to recruit and retain high-quality managers and coaches who otherwise may be deterred due to the difficulties associated with inheriting a team that has players previously drafted by a different manager(s).
5. The social and emotional opportunities for players to play with and get to know a wider network of players from year to year.
6. Reduces the controversy that occurs each year the number of Majors teams is increased or decreased based on the increase or decrease of player enrollment.

CONS:

1. The perception by some Majors division managers that are they are being penalized for developing strong teams.
2. The possibility that some current managers may decide not to return next year if they are unable to keep their originally drafted players.
3. The potential loss of team cohesion that can be established over several years of players being together on the same team.
4. The social and emotional difficulties some players may experience if they are re-drafted onto different teams each year.
5. The possibility that some 11 year olds may choose not to return next year if they cannot remain on the team for which they had been originally drafted

WHY NOT WAIT FOR THE LITTLE LEAGUE CONGRESS TO MAKE THE DECISION?

A good question. Davis Little League could simply wait for the change to be made at the national level, at which point we would have no choice and would need to make the change. The DLL Board chose to move ahead at this time because:

1. Davis Little League expects that this rule change will occur within the next few years at the national level.
2. This is a growing trend in District 64 and around the country. Woodland successfully transitioned from Option A to Option B rules in 2007.
3. There are currently 144 Majors players – 52 of these current players are 12 year olds and will be aging-out of Little League and will not be impacted by this change; 72 of the current players are in their first year at the Majors level and have had no experience returning to the same team and manager; and there are 4 current managers who will be leaving Little League next year due to normal attrition (their child is aging-out of LL), which means the players on those teams will be getting a new manager regardless of draft rules. Therefore, there are fewer than 20 current players who may be impacted by this change.
4. The number of non-competitive games with extremely lopsided scores has increased significantly over the last few years, resulting in many demoralized teams and players and an increase in parent complaints about imbalanced teams.
5. Davis Little League needs to recruit and retain more managers for the Majors Division; it is our hope that by leveling the playing field in terms of the drafting of players that more managers will be willing to volunteer for the manager role.