

# 2019 Kirkland Softball All-Star FAQ

## What is All-Stars?

All-Stars is the colloquial term for Little League International's (LLI) series of post-season tournaments run by the local District, State, Region, or LLI. The Little League World Series is televised on ESPN or ESPN2 and is one component of the post-season tournament structure.

## What is the post-season tournament structure?

Little League International supports many levels of post-season tournament play, each with its own age restrictions and often with different sets of playing rules. The following chart shows the Softball All-Star Divisions for which our league is eligible to submit and their respective tournament dates:

<b>Division</b>	<b>District*</b>	<b>State*</b>	<b>Regionals</b>	<b>World Series</b>
<b>8/9/10</b>	<b>Jun 24-Jul 1</b> Snoqualmie, WA	<b>Jul 6-13</b> Lynnwood, WA	N/A	N/A
<b>9/10/11</b>	<b>Jun 26- Jul 1</b> Snoqualmie, WA	<b>Jul 13-20</b> Redmond, WA	N/A	N/A
<b>Majors</b>	<b>Jun 17-24</b> Mercer Island, WA	<b>Jun 29- Jul 6</b> Poulsbo, WA	<b>Jul 20-26</b> San Bernardino, CA	<b>Aug 7-14</b> Portland, OR
<b>Juniors</b>	<b>Jun 17-24**</b> Mercer Island, WA	<b>Jun 29- Jul 6</b> Ridgefield, WA	<b>Jul 17-25</b> Tucson, AZ	<b>Jul 28- Aug 3</b> Kirkland, WA

\*End dates are approximate and not finalized until leagues submit their teams for bracket creation

\*\*The winner of the District 9 (D9) Junior Softball Tournament usually receives an automatic berth as the host team in the Junior Softball World Series, held in Kirkland, WA. The first runner-up proceeds to States and beyond. In theory, there could be two D9 teams in the Junior Softball World Series.

## How do I determine my player's Little League Age?

A player's Little League Age is determined by their age on December 31 of the prior year. For the Spring 2019 season, a player's age as of Dec 31, 2018 is their Little League Age. For example, if a player was 11 on December 31, 2018, they are considered Little League Age 11 for the entire Spring 2019 season and 2019 All-Star season that follows; regardless of whether they have a birthday during either of those seasons and are currently 12 years old. A player's Little League Age is calculated differently for softball than baseball.

## What is District 9?

Washington State is divided into 12 districts and our league is part of District 9 or D9. Within D9, there are 14 total Charters (i.e. KALL, KNLL, Bellevue West, Mercer Island, etc.) and each Charter will either

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field their own teams or combine with other neighboring charters to build teams to compete at the various district tournaments and beyond.

### What players are eligible for each All-Star Divisions?

All players who have played in 60% of their team's regular season games and have played at a competitive level for their age are eligible for selection. The full list of division eligibility can be found on page 120 of Little League's 2019 Rulebook. Below is a quick chart:

My player is Little League Age...	...and played in...	Eligible to play in All-Star Division...
13 or 14	Juniors	Juniors
12	Juniors	Juniors or Majors
12	Majors	Majors
11	Majors	Majors or 9/10/11
11	Coast	9/10/11
10	Majors	Majors, 9/10/11, or 8/9/10
10	Coast	9/10/11, or 8/9/10
9	Coast	9/10/11, or 8/9/10
8	Coast	8/9/10

### What rules does each All-Star Division use?

A quick synopsis of the rules most impactful to parents and players are listed below:

- Juniors- Largely the same as regular season Juniors rules; 12" ball, 43' pitching plate.
- Majors- Largely the same as regular season Majors rules; 12" ball, 40' pitching plate.
- 9/10/11- Largely the same as regular season Majors rules; 12" ball, 40' pitching plate.
- 8/9/10- Largely the same as regular season Coast rules; 11" ball, 35' pitching plate.

A full description of the Tournament Rules for all Divisions starts on page 115 of Little League's 2019 Rulebook.

### Can my players be eligible for more than one All-Star Division?

Yes. For example, a player who is Little League aged 10 (was 10 years old on December 31, 2018), who played on a Majors Division team during the regular season and participated in 60% of their team's games would be eligible for selection to 3 different All-Star teams (Majors, 9/10/11, and 8/9/10).

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### **Can my player be selected to more than one All-Star team?**

No. Players may only be selected to one All-Star team.

### **What if my player was a 12-year old who dual-rostered on a Majors and Juniors team?**

While 12-year old players can dual-roster on both a Majors and Juniors team, even if they played in 60% of the games for each team, they may only be selected to one All-Star team.

### **If my player expresses interest in playing All-Stars and she is eligible for multiple All-Star teams, can she indicate that she does not want to play within a certain All-Star Division?**

Yes. While it is an honor to be selected to any All-Star team, in some scenarios, players may not desire to be placed on a specific team. For example, a 10-year old player who played at Majors all year pitching a 12" ball from 40' might not want to play at the 8/9/10 Division with an 11" ball at 35'. We want players to have a good experience during regular and post season play.

HOWEVER... Please note that players who opt out of any of the Division levels for which they are eligible, will be removed from the player pool for those Divisions thereby decreasing their chances for All-Star selection.

### **Will my availability conflicts negatively impact my player's chances for All-Star selection?**

#### **If my player is selected to All-Stars, do I have to cancel my vacation plans?**

Our goal is to have parents provide the League with accurate information regarding their daughter's availability during All-Stars. This will help Managers schedule practices such that the maximum number of players can attend each practice. We understand that players may have prior commitments and some conflicts might be unavoidable.

If a player indicates that they will be on vacation during tournaments or can't attend any practices, it may influence the selection committee to select a player who will be able to attend and contribute more fully to the team.

### **After my player is selected to an All-Star team if their availability changes, will they be removed from the team?**

The Manager and league officials will review on a case by case basis any player availability changes as they arise to determine what is best for the team and the league.

Please note there are no "Pool Players" for All-Stars. Any personnel changes made to the roster become permanent for the remainder of the tournament season for that team.

Additionally, a new rule was incorporated this year that states that if a team arrives to a tournament game with only 11 players (vacation or even sickness), the Tournament Director will only allow TWO coaches

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in the dugout for that game. This could incentivize Managers and Leagues to permanently replace players when conflicts arise with tournament schedules.

### **Does our league participate in every All-Star Division available every year?**

Our goal is to find ways to field All-Star teams at every Division level for which we are eligible. The Softball program typically registers for Juniors and Majors each year and reviews registration numbers to determine participation at either one or both lower levels. In early April, we review our player registration numbers to determine for which All-Star divisions there are sufficient players to field a team and then again after we receive all Player Interest and Availability forms.

### **If my child is selected to All-Stars, what are we committing to as a family?**

Starting June 2, if your child is selected for All-Stars, you should expect their team to hold practices 3-6 days a week until their first tournament starts. The league expectation is that players are willing to attend practices and are available for all games in the tournament. Unlike the regular season, teams cannot temporarily add Pool Players due to player absences. Player absences hinder a team's chances of winning and the expectation is that players participating in All-Stars will attend practices and games.

On June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, KALL will host the Kirkland City Championships between KALL and KNLL. At the end of the final game of the championships, each league will introduce the rosters for each of their All-Star teams. We expect players selected to All-Stars to be in attendance that evening for introductions.

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, our league will also enter an All-Star float in the Kirkland 4th of July Parade. We encourage players selected to the various All-Star teams to make themselves available for this fun event! (Please, no water guns...)

Unlike the regular season, All-Stars is very competitive. Teams continue to play until they accumulate two losses within a tournament. The overall winner moves on to the next round. Because players want to keep playing and want to advance as far as they can, teams play to win. Winning requires additional development and extraordinary team cohesion which only comes from full teams practicing together on a regular basis.

### **What does All-Stars cost?**

Our league does not charge an additional fee if your child is selected onto an All-Star team. As part of each All-Star team, each player will receive an All-Star jersey and visor or bow. Parents are responsible for acquiring the proper colored pants, socks, and belts such that all players have matching uniforms. In some cases, a player's regular season pants, socks, and belt may already be the proper color and no additional purchase is necessary.

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State, Regional, and World Series tournaments are most often held in locations outside of our local area. In such cases, parents are expected to pay for travel, food, and lodging for the player and family members that wish to attend the tournament.

Teams who earn their way to the World Series will receive new uniforms for the event courtesy of LLI.

### **Why do the Softball All-Star jerseys not have our league name and colors?**

Due to player registrations, our league often combines with the other Kirkland league to create All-Star teams. This Inter-league combining is approved through D9 and then West Region. When the two leagues combine to create an All-Star team at a specific All-Star Division, both Charters have agreed to use the term Kirkland All-Stars and to use neither of the color schemes from our respective Charters. In the occasion where our league fields an All-Star team consisting of all players registered within our league, the uniforms for that All-Star team would use our league name and colors.

### **Why did KALL/KNLL choose "Seahawks" colors for the Softball All-Stars?**

Both Charters have agreed to not use their own colors when forming a combined All-Star team. The Navy and Lime colors were chosen because no one else in D9 uses those colors and the majority of parents, families, and friends already have articles of clothing in those colors which they could wear to games to show support for our teams.

### **Why doesn't our league hold tryouts?**

We believe that the entire season is a tryout and we assess a player's performance in real games against other top players across a season of games. We believe this to be a more accurate assessment than a 1-hour test in an artificial game setting where a child could have one off day remove them from consideration.

### **Who votes for All Stars?**

The managers and coaches of the appropriate aged Division(s) vote on the top players within that League based on a set of criteria. The process and criteria for selection are stated in detail within our league's [Local Rules](#).

### **How many players are selected to All-Star teams?**

According to the Little League Softball 2019 Rulebook, the minimum All-Star team size is 12 players. According to our Local Rules, our maximum team size is 12 players. There are different minimum play rules at 13 players than 12 and we believe that restricting the team size to 12 players will provide a more satisfying experience for members of the team.

### **If my player is selected, will they get to play in every game?**

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According to the Little League Softball 2019 Rulebook requires all players to complete minimum play requirements for each game. For All-Star teams of 12 players, each player must participate in 6 consecutive defensive outs in the field and bat once during a game. For All-Star teams of 13 or 14 players, each player is required to bat once per game.

### **How are the All-Star team Manager and Coaches selected?**

Like players, eligible managers and coaches will submit a Manager and Coach Availability and Interest to their Division VP **whether they plan to coach or not**. The process and criteria for selection are stated in detail within our league's [Local Rules](#).

### **Why do managers' and coaches' children make All-Stars so frequently?**

The All-Star selection process is moderated by the Player Agents who ensure that all eligible players are assessed against the selection criteria and are represented fairly during the selection process.

Due to the time commitments required for their positions, managers and coaches tend to be parent volunteers who are the most actively dedicated to teach players the proper techniques for playing baseball and softball. Additionally, our league spends a fair amount of resources training managers and coaches to improve their teaching skills. The reality is that sons and daughters of managers and coaches often benefit more from this training than other players. A player who has an excellent hitting coach as a dad or an experienced pitching coach as a mom and can work with that "personal coach" every day of the week outside of team practices, is more likely to master certain fundamentals faster than players who do not.

Please remember that everyone involved with our league as a Board Member, Manager, or Coach are volunteers and always strive to do the best that they can to create a fair system guided by policies and processes.

### **How does my player participate in All-Stars?**

Softball players within each All-Star eligible division (Junior, Major, Coast) must meet the following criteria:

- Submit an All-Star Interest and Availability form by May 10, 2018
- Eligible players must be within the age range of an All-Star level for which the league is registering a tournament team
- Played at least 60% of their team's games during the regular season.

Once a player has submitted their Interest and Availability Form and it is confirmed by the Player Agent(s) that they have met the minimum eligibility requirements for All-Stars, they will be put into the selection pool.

### **Where do I get an Interest and Availability form?**

The Softball Player Agent will email each family at Coast, Majors, and Juniors the URL for the online application.

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### **When are Interest and Availability form submissions due?**

Softball online submissions must be completed by **May 10<sup>th</sup>**. We request that all players submit a form even if they are declining selection to an All-Star team. That way we can be sure that every player was aware of the opportunity available to them.

### **Why is the Softball Interest and Availability submission due date so early?**

Traditionally, regular season registration for Softball is significantly less than Baseball. As such, sometimes our league must combine with another charter within D9 in order to field an All-Star team at certain levels or just cancel an All-Star Division altogether. Since D9 requires that we commit to which All-Star divisions we will support by May 15<sup>th</sup>, we need to close submissions end of day May 10<sup>th</sup> in order to review the numbers in preparation for those discussions with D9.

### **When are All-Star player announcements?**

On June 1, the All-Star manager will contact the players who were selected to All-Stars and the regular season manager contacts the players on their regular season team who did not get selected to All-Stars. Once completed, our league will post rosters on our website, in coordination with other leagues if we have combined for an All-Star team. All-Star teams are introduced in person on the night of the City of Kirkland Championships, usually held within the first ten days of June.