

## 2021 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 highest level at "Majors" and above is the Little League World Series whose games are televised on ESPN, ESPN2, or ESPN+.

### 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:

Division	District*	State*	Regionals*	World Series
8/9/10	<b>Jun 28- Jul 3</b> North Bend, WA	<b>Jul 10-16</b> Poulsbo, WA	N/A	N/A
9/10/11	<b>Jun 28- Jul 3</b> North Bend, WA	<b>Jul 10-16</b> Auburn, WA	N/A	N/A
<b>Majors</b>	<b>Jun 19-25</b> Kirkland, WA	<b>Jun 29- Jul 6</b> Vancouver, WA	<b>Jul 24- 30</b> <sup>^</sup> San Bernardino, CA	<b>Aug 11- 18</b> Greenville, NC
<b>Juniors</b>	<b>Jun 19-25</b> ** Kirkland, WA	<b>Jul 5- 11</b> Vancouver, WA	<b>Jul 21- 29</b> <sup>^</sup> Tucson, AZ	<b>Aug 1- 7</b> Kirkland, WA
<b>Seniors</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>Jul 21- 29</b> <sup>^</sup> Missoula, MT	<b>Aug 2- 8</b> Lower Sussex, DE

\*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.

<sup>^</sup> These dates have been communicated by the District but not publicly posted at this time (4/22/2021) and may shift

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

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### 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 2021 season, a player's age as of Dec 31, 2020 is their Little League Age. See the chart below:

Birth Year	LL Age
2012	8
2011	9
2010	10
2009	11
2008	12
2007	13
2006	14
2005	15
2004	16

**NOTE:** The LL Softball Age calculation is different than baseball

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

Both Kirkland American and Kirkland National designate the Coast, Majors, Juniors, and Seniors Divisions as competitive divisions that are eligible for All-Stars. Your child must have competed in one of these divisions in order to be considered for eligibility.

The next step in determining eligibility is did the player's team meet the minimum number of official games for the season. If a team does not complete the minimum number of games for the season, every player on that team is automatically deemed ineligible for All-Stars, regardless of how many games in which the player participated. The minimum thresholds are:

**Seniors-** 10 official games of record

**Coast/Majors/Juniors-** 12 official games of record

The next step in determining eligibility is did the player who played for a regular season team that met their minimum threshold participate in the minimum required games. The minimum thresholds are:

**Seniors-** participated in at least 6 games

**Coast/Majors/Juniors-** participated in at least 8 games

For the 2021 season, Little League changed the rules regarding ages and regular season participation. For this year, players are eligible to play at All-Star Division levels, regardless of which Division at which they played during the regular season, provided the team and the player met the minimum number of games required for that level and they are within the age range. **For any players who played at Coast, Majors, Juniors, or Seniors this season**, refer to the chart below to determine all of the Divisions for which your child is eligible.

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<b>Division</b>	<b>My team officially completed ...</b>	<b>...and I'm LL Age</b>
<b>Seniors</b>	10 games of which I participated in 6 or more	12 through 16
<b>Juniors</b>	12 games of which I participated in 8 or more	12 through 14
<b>Majors</b>	12 games of which I participated in 8 or more	10 through 12
<b>9/10/11</b>	12 games of which I participated in 8 or more	9 through 11
<b>8/9/10</b>	12 games of which I participated in 8 or more	8 through 10

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

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

- Seniors- Largely the same as regular season Juniors rules; 12" ball, 43' pitching plate.
- 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.

You can read a full description under the section Tournament Rules and Guidelines in the Little League Rules Mobile App.

### **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, 2020) and played on a Coast team that completed at least 12 scheduled games while the player participated in 11 of those games, would be eligible for selection in the 8/9/10, 9/10/11, and Majors All-Stars Divisions.

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

Yes. The new rules are that a player can be selected to a second All-Star team as long as three conditions are met:

1. They are selected to one team and that team has completed its tournament
2. The next All-Star team they join is of a higher age group than the one on which they were initially rostered and played
3. They are not "kicking" another player "off" the original roster of the second team

In theory, a 12-year old player could play on a Majors All-Star team and if their team is knocked out of the tournament, could then join a District wide Seniors team.

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

While 12-year old players can dual-roster on both a Majors and Juniors 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 or may have a conflict with the tournament schedule. For example, a 10-year old player who played her regular season games at Majors 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.

**NOTE:** Players who opt out of 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.

Players that indicate they will be unavailable during tournaments or many practices, may prompt 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, if a team arrives to a tournament game with only 11 players, the Tournament Director will only allow TWO coaches in the dugout for that game. This could incentivize Managers and Leagues to permanently replace players when conflicts arise with tournament schedules.

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### **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 1, 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 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 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.

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.

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### **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 player 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 players who participate in All-Stars.

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

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 complete one at bat during the game. For All-Star teams of 13 or 14 players, each player is required to complete one at bat per game.

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

Like players, eligible managers and coaches will submit a signed Manager and Coach Availability and Interest Form 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. League Presidents then review and approve the final All-Star rosters.

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 (Seniors, Junior, Major, Coast) must meet the following criteria:

- Submit an All-Star Interest and Availability form by May 10, 2021
- Eligible players must be within the age range of an All-Star level for which the league is registering a tournament team
- Played in at least 8 games for a team that officially completed at least 12 games

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 or VP of Softball will email each family at Coast, Majors, Juniors, and Seniors 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 or shortly thereafter, 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 typically introduced in person on the night of the City of Kirkland Championships, usually held within the first ten days of June.