



BASEBALL'S NATIONAL PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK 2023 / 2024

National Participation Framework 2023 / 2024 Season

National Baseball Playing & Age Grades

		National Baseball Grade or Program	Player Age Range	Age Eligibility / Player DOB	Official Game Requirements	National Tournaments
JUNIOR BASEBALL	Club Junior Development Programs	Cub Ball (formerly kiwiball)	4 - 7 years	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2020 Maximum DOB - 31/08/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered baseball members 	Club and/or Regional Gala Days & Festival Days School Festival days
		Sluggers	7 & 8 years	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2016 Maximum DOB - 31/08/2015		
		Rookie Ball	8 - 10 years	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2015 Maximum DOB - 31/08/2013		
	Introductory League	Minor Ball	U12 (8 - 11 years)	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2015 Maximum DOB - 31/08/2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered baseball members 	
YOUTH BASEBALL	Youth Leagues	12U league	11 & 12 years	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2013 Maximum DOB - 31/08/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered baseball members Little League Rules & Regulations Umpire = Certified Community Club Umpire Scorekeeper = Certified Level 0 Scorekeeper Team Roster, Pitch Counts, Game score and/or results and umpire details loaded into MyBall Club 	National Baseball Festival (12U & 14U)
		13U league	12 & 13 years	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2012 Maximum DOB - 31/08/2011		National 16U Champs
		14U league	13 & 14 years	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2011 Maximum DOB - 31/08/2009		
		16U league	15 & 16 years	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2009 Maximum DOB - 31/08/2007		
SENIOR BASEBALL	Adult / Senior Leagues	19U League	16 - 19 years	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2007 Maximum DOB - 31/08/2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered baseball members WBSC & OBR Rules & Regulations Umpire = NZBUA Accredited Umpire Scorekeeper = Certified Level 1 Scorekeeper Team Roster, Pitch Counts & Game score, and results loaded into MyBall Club 	21U National Champs
		Divisional / Reserve Grade League	17+ years	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2007		National Club Champs (open & masters grades)
		Senior / Open League	17+ years	Minimum DOB - 01/09/2007		



BASEBALL'S NATIONAL PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK 2023 / 2024

National Participation Framework.

Baseball NZ introduced the National Participation Framework in the 2022/2023 baseball season to establish a national, unified, age and stage-appropriate, developmental playing platform throughout all of baseball in NZ. The National Participation Framework (NPF) provides a consistent approach and rule set to the delivery of baseball and baseball programs, throughout NZ.

- **National Participation Working Group (NPWG)**

A community working group, the National Participation Working Group (NPWG) was established with key stakeholders from our baseball community to provide a community-led direction and pathway to embedding the NPF. The NPWG recommendations provide the next steps and requirements for the delivery of club and community baseball for the 2023/2024 baseball season and beyond.

National Participation Framework Guidelines, Regulations & Updates

The National Participation Framework integrates Little League as the junior and youth league play model for baseball within the NPF. As we embed the NPF and Little League within this structure, and further develop and grow baseball in NZ, the following deliverables are required for the 2023/2024 season and beyond from all affiliated baseball clubs:

1. Highly recommend for 2023/2024 season, all baseball regional associations undertake and register an official Little League Charter.
 - There will be a requirement for all regions to undertake a Little League charter from 2024/2025 season and beyond.
 - It is NOT a requirement for Little League charters to compete or challenge at the National Little League Play-Off Series. This can be determined annually by the committee.
2. All junior baseball leagues (minor ball league) & youth baseball leagues, as outlined in the National Participation Framework, will now consistently be played under the Little League model, rules, and regulations throughout all Baseball NZ affiliated clubs.
 - This includes both Little League chartered and unchartered regions.
 - This is now a requirement of all affiliated baseball clubs throughout NZ.
3. All Regional and Club junior development programs; Cub-Ball / Kiwi-Ball / T-Ball, Sluggers, and Rookie Ball programs are locally led programs along with other initiatives. These programs are outside league parameters.
 - All junior baseball programs must follow the nationally aligned age and grade structures outlined in the National Participation Framework.
4. All senior baseball leagues are played under WBSC International rules and regulations, which are also inclusive of the Official Baseball Rules (OBR).



BASEBALL'S NATIONAL PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK 2023 / 2024

5. Each Little League charter must confirm their intention to challenge and compete at the National Little League Play-Off Series, in writing to Baseball NZ's Little League District Administrator (LL DA) by 1st December 2023.
 - Confirmation to compete at National Little League Play-Off Series is an annual process and may change each year.
 - Charters are able to compete in either/and 12U, 13U, 14U and 16U age grades.
6. Little League charter boundaries 2023/2024 season align to regional association boundaries, with local board and council boundary lines used to depict a charter boundary.
7. Any local variations to the Little League rule set must be formally applied for, by the league president, through Baseball NZ's Little League District Administrator (LL DA), by 15th October 2023, before the baseball season commences, and approved by William Sport International.
8. All players in NZ who do not have a Little League charter in their region will be able to seek a waiver to participate in the regular season league play and tournament play (upon selection).
 - Out of charter waivers are sort through a players' club and the chartered regional association's league president completing and submitting to Baseball NZ's Little League District Administrator (LL DA) to forward to William Sport International for approval or otherwise.
 - Little League waivers should be submitted before the season commences or as soon as possible to ensure players are approved for play by William Sport International.
 - All youth players throughout NZ will have the ability to play both the Little League regular season and tournament season through the waiver process for the 2023/2024 baseball season in NZ.
9. All players must be registered baseball members in the National Baseball Registration system (Sporty), to play ball.
 - Players considering transferring or moving clubs should undertake transfers outside of the baseball season, so as not to impact upon the team they are departing and the team they are entering.
 - Player transfers undertaken once the season has started should only take place or be approved by the regional association under extenuating circumstances.
 - Players transferring or moving between clubs MUST complete a 'Player Transfer Form'.
 - Any player that transfers or moves club MUST still have completed the four (4) official game minimum to be eligible to represent their new club at National Tournaments, in any age grade.
10. All players are required to be registered within and play within their playing age grade, as per the National Participation Framework guidelines.
 - A player may seek a dispensation from their regional association to play up, one age grade higher, to support/enable that higher age grade team to be able to participate in league play.
 - No player is to be granted a dispensation to play down an age grade. Any such request MUST come to Baseball NZ and would be carefully considered and highly unlikely to be granted.



BASEBALL'S NATIONAL PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK 2023 / 2024

- To support a player's wellbeing, physical, psychosocial and game developmental needs, plus meet Sport NZ's Balance is Better philosophy and all Health & Safety requirements - No players should be dispensated to play up more than one age grade. Therefore the below applies:
 - 12U players can be dispensated to play into 14U
 - 14U players can be dispensated to play into 16U
 - 16U players can be dispensated to play into 19U, reserves or prems
- A player may play for more than one team in their registered club, so long as it is age-appropriate (as per the above), the correct dispensation has been sort and confirmed and the player and parents are comfortable with this approach.

11. During the regular season a player's priority is their club baseball team/program and regional little league representative teams are in addition to club teams/programs.

12. Charters/regions must refrain from additional little league squad/team trainings until after the 1st Jan 2024 (and annually each year). In scheduling and providing additional little league squad/team trainings, charters must adhere to Sport NZ's balance is better philosophy and ensure:

- Consideration has been applied to a player's overall load as a junior or youth player
- Club baseball and club team training and games take priority over representative little league training and programs.
- National Team selection, training and tournaments take priority at a higher level over little league selection, training and tournaments.

2023/2024 Timeline & Key Dates

October 2023	1 st 15 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Confirmation of chartering to Baseball NZ and LL DA▪ Boundary map submitted and any local/regional rule variations submitted to Baseball NZ & Little League District Administrator (LL DA)
November 2023	1 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ All out-of-charter dispensations submitted to league presidents to sign off and submit to LL DA as soon as possible.▪ Expressions of Interests (EOI's) and application process for LL coaches can be advertised from 1st Nov onwards.▪ EOI's from players to compete in Little League can be advertised from 1st Nov onwards.
December 2023	1 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Little League Coaches can be announced (1st Dec onwards)▪ Little League squad can formed from 1st Dec onwards (note no additional squad or team trainings until 1st Jan 2024)
January 2024	1 st 18 th – 21 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Little League squad / team training can commence▪ National Baseball Festival (12U, 14U) - Auckland
February 2024	15 th – 18 th 15 th – 18 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ National 16U Champs - Auckland▪ 21U National Champs - Hamilton



BASEBALL'S NATIONAL PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK 2023 / 2024

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| March 2024 | 14 th – 17 th | ▪ National Club Champs - Auckland |
| April 2024 | | ▪ National Little League Play-Off Series – dates TBC
▪ Little League Asia Pacific Tournament – dates TBC |
| June / July 2024 | | ▪ Little League Asia Pacific Tournament - dates TBC |

National Little League Play-Off Series

All NZ Little League charters who wish to challenge in the National Little League Play-Off Series must confirm their intention and attendance by 1st December 2023 in writing to Baseball NZ.

- National Little League Play-Offs will take place in April 2024 and April on an ongoing annual basis. Dates TBC.
- The winner in each age grade, 12U, 13U, 14U & 16U, will host the following year.
- The 2024 National Little League Play-Off Series will be equally split or agreed between Wellington & Auckland to start the hosting cycles. As the two charters that have signaled to challenge at present.
- All National Little League Play-Off Series will be played under the Little League Tournament season rules and regulations
- The National Little League Play Off Series host charter will be fully responsible for the cost of hosting the Play Off Series and each challenging charter will be fully responsible for the organization and costs of attending a National Play Off Series along with the management, health & safety of travelling with junior and youth players.

Official Games

To ensure community club baseball is developing the wider participants and volunteers in the game, adhering to the National Participation Framework and providing eligibility criteria for participation at National Tournaments, parameters have been established to define an 'official game'.

- All players on a team are registered baseball members
- Little League Rules & Regulations are applied and followed
- All Junior and Youth League games are officiated by a certified Community Club Umpire
- All Junior and Youth League games are scored by a certified Level 0 Scorekeeper
- Team Rosters, Pitch Counts, Game scores and/or results along with umpires' names and club details are loaded into MyBall Club