

# Palo Alto Little League 2012 Majors/PCL Tryouts Overview 9 to 12-year-old Players

Palo Alto Little League (PALL) will hold tryouts for players wishing to participate in either the Majors or PCL division. Players trying out for Majors must attend two separate days to be eligible to be drafted on a Majors team. Players trying out for PCL must attend only one day of tryouts.

PALL manages two leagues, the American and National leagues. Players who tryout are eligible to be drafted by a team in either league. Players will be notified by February 16<sup>th</sup> of their placement.

## KEY DATES, TIMES & PLACE

*CITY-WIDE TRYOUTS FOR MAJORS WILL BE ORGANIZED BY AGE*

Any player who attends a tryout for Majors but is not selected by a Majors team will automatically be considered for placement on a team in PCL. There will not be an additional PCL-only tryout.

### Tryout Dates (All sessions currently to be held at Middlefield Ballpark):

- Saturday, January 7
- Sunday, January 8
- Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>
- Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup> (rain date, only if required)

Players must attend at least two days to be considered for Majors; one day for PCL

Place: **CHECK WEB SITE TO CONFIRM LOCATION:** Currently, all tryouts are scheduled to be at Middlefield Ballpark.

Rain?: We will hold tryouts in a light rain; if a downpour, please consult the Web site ([www.pabaseball.org](http://www.pabaseball.org)) for the latest update.

### TRYOUTS TIMES (Jan 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>):

*LOCATION: Middlefield Ballpark.*

11 & 12-year-olds:	Registration: 8:30am. Tryouts: 9:00am to 10:30am
10-year-olds:	Registration: 10:00am. Tryouts: 10:30am to 12:30pm
9-year-olds:	Registration: 12:30pm. Tryouts: 1:00pm to 3:00pm

### TRYOUTS TIMES (January 28<sup>th</sup>):

*LOCATION: Middlefield Ballpark.*

11 & 12-year-olds:	Registration: 8:30am Tryouts: 9:00am to 10:30am
10-year-olds:	Registration: 10:00am. Tryouts: 10:30am to 12pm
9-year-olds:	Registration: 12:00pm. Tryouts: 12pm to 1:30pm

## FACT SHEET

This fact sheet has been created in order to give prospective players and parents an understanding of the Majors/PCL tryout process. Please read this document carefully as it explains how Palo Alto baseball is organized and how players are selected. It lays out our philosophy about the Majors and PCL, explains what is expected of the players and of the parents, as well as answers frequently asked questions parents and players often have at the start of the season.

### **PALO ALTO OPERATES TWO SEPARATE BASEBALL LEAGUES:**

PALL is governed by the rules set forward by Little League International. Because of the size of the Palo Alto community, Palo Alto Little League actually operates as two separate leagues with one common board of directors. Players who are eligible to be drafted by or placed on a team in either league. Teams in both leagues play each other throughout the season and qualifying teams from both leagues participate in the City Championship Tournament.

The Board usually meets on the third Tuesday of every month at the Middlefield Clubhouse.

### **PLAYER AGENTS:**

The person in charge of each division is called the Player Agent. There are Player Agents for Majors National, Majors American and PCL. The three work closely together with the Board to coordinate league policies and parent and player expectations. Player agents and contact information are as follows:

Majors: Kristin Foss ([agent\\_majors\\_s@pabaseball.org](mailto:agent_majors_s@pabaseball.org))  
Charlie Goldberg ([agent\\_majors\\_n@pabaseball.org](mailto:agent_majors_n@pabaseball.org))  
PCL : Ted Bucklin ([agent\\_pcl@pabaseball.org](mailto:agent_pcl@pabaseball.org))  
John Markevitch ([agent\\_pcl@pabaseball.org](mailto:agent_pcl@pabaseball.org))

### **MAJORS VS. PACIFIC COAST LEAGUE (PCL):**

Palo Alto Little League has many levels of play for players ages 9 to 12:

Coach Pitch: 7 and 8-year-old players.  
Pitch Machine: 9 and 10-year-old players (8-year-olds via skill evaluation/tryout).  
PCL: 11 year-old players (9s and 10s via skill evaluation/tryout).  
Majors: 9 to 12-year-olds, via skill evaluation and draft only

Majors and Pacific Coast League (PCL) are the more competitive divisions. 12-year-olds *automatically* get assigned to Majors if they attend at least 2 Majors tryouts. 11-year-olds *automatically* get assigned to PCL *unless* they have tried out twice *and* have been drafted onto a Majors team. 9- and 10-year-olds *automatically* get assigned to Pitching Machine *unless* they have tried out and have been assigned or drafted onto PCL or Majors teams.

*To be eligible for Majors*, players have to go through at least two days of Majors skills evaluation "tryouts."

*To be eligible for PCL*, players that have not previously played PCL have to go through only *one* day of skills evaluation

Skill evaluations require players to demonstrate their ability to run the bases, throw a baseball, field ground balls, catch fly balls, and hit a pitched ball. Player agents, managers and coaches observe and rate each youngster in an effort to assess ability and experience and to determine at which level the youngster should play.

Players are then “drafted” from the pool of eligible players, onto the Majors teams by the individual team managers, and retain their roster slot with the same Majors team for the duration of their Little League playing career.

11 -year-olds who are *not* drafted will *automatically* get assigned to a PCL team. 9- and 10-year-old players not selected *may or may not* get assigned to a PCL team, depending on skill level and space availability, though any 10-year-old who previously played PCL as a 9- will *automatically* get assigned to PCL. Parents will be notified no later than Tuesday, February 16 as to the status of their child’s tryout. PCL team assignments will be announced at a parent meeting in March.

*We recognize there is a lot of stress surrounding these skill evaluations. Many parents and their children want or expect to play at the highest level available, and are understandably disappointed when they don’t make it. However, players progress at different rates. Thus, we strive to provide a playing environment that is appropriate for everyone’s skill level and is as inclusive as possible.*

### **12s Playing Majors**

Little League International rules dictate that 12-year-olds can elect to play in the Majors division. They must still attend tryouts in order to be selected.

Palo Alto Little League believes that kids are best served by playing with others at a similar skill level, especially at the PCL and Majors levels. PALL has an evaluation system for the Majors tryouts in order to increase the chances that players with the best skills would be selected, regardless of their age.

After tryouts and before the draft, we will contact parents whose children tried out for Majors but may be best served by the PCL division. We will provide quantitative information about their child’s skill level as evaluated by the Majors Managers and Player Agents (This information is considered confidential, and we will only tell you your child’s level, and not others.) Although the final decision is that of a player and his/her parents, we feel that this information will provide an indication of the type of experience your child should expect at each level.

### ***Majors or PCL? Helping parents decide.***

Regardless of skill level, players in Majors are expected to be committed to baseball. There will be at least 4 days of activity per week, with each session lasting at least 2 hours. Major’s players are expected to play only baseball and not a second sport. Players with relatively lower skills will often play the minimum, which is one time at bat and two innings in the field per game.

Both PCL and Majors divisions play two games per week.

PCL has the same minimum playing rule as Majors but uses a continuous batting order so players stay in the batting line-up even when they are not in the field (2 innings). By the rules of International Little League, 12-year-olds are not allowed to pitch in PCL. The PCL time commitment can be as much as 4 days per week, but in general there is more flexibility at this level.

### **MAJORS TEAMS BY DIVISION:**

#### **Palo Alto American**

- Hengehold
- Lions
- LPM
- Palo Alto Venture Partners
- PA Sport Shop

## **Palo Alto National**

- Alhouse
- All Out Baseball
- Bike Connection
- Morgan-Gault Homes
- Old Pro
- Stanford Electric

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

### **How does the draft work?**

*Majors:* Managers draft players in reverse order of finish (based on last year's results). They each select the number of players required to bring their team to 12 players each.

*PCL:* The Player Agents form the teams, taking into account (a) availability of Managers, (b) skill level so that the teams are competitively balanced, and (c) schools to the extent of trying to make sure each player has at least one or two schoolmates if possible.

### **Do I have to go where I'm drafted?**

Yes. Players drafted by major division teams may not play PCL. If you attend tryouts and then later decide that you do not want your child to play at the Major level you must notify the major player agents before Monday January 30.

### **What skills are you looking for?**

Players will be evaluated for throwing, arm strength, fielding, catching flies, running bases and hitting a pitched ball. In addition, managers tend to notice attitude, confidence level and intangibles – does the player run to his position and look ready and eager to play? Is the player paying attention? Did the player come dressed to play baseball? In short, managers care less about whether a player actually catches a fly ball (though important) than how they looked preparing to catch it (even more important).

### **Why are pitching skills not taken into consideration?**

The skills evaluation is designed to show basic arm strength and throwing technique – both of which are fundamental to pitching. Most managers feel pitchers need to be developed and usually train them specifically for that skill.

### **What is the likelihood of my child getting drafted to Majors?**

All players registering will get to play baseball, though not all will play in Majors. The chances of making Majors vary from year to year, and are based on skill levels, demographics, etc.

### **How many 9-year-olds are selected for PCL or typically drafted each year to Majors?**

Historically, very few 9-year-olds make PCL and fewer still make Majors.

### **Should my 9- or 10-year-old try-out for PCL-only?**

We believe as many kids as possible should tryout for Majors. There is still value to the experience if a child tries out for Majors and is not drafted. However, many parents and players know they only want to play in PCL, if given the chance. They are welcome to tryout for PCL only.

### **How are managers and coaches selected for PCL and Majors?**

In PCL, the player agents select the managers. Volunteer forms, tryouts, word-of-mouth and previous associations all are factors in finding managers. Then, they look for baseball knowledge, an ability to teach, availability of hours and an understanding of what it means to be a volunteer and leader. Player agents also try to spread out individuals known to want to assist by coaching.

In Majors, the player agents, along with the Board President, select the managers, subject to a vote approval by the Board. Coaches are also voted on. A similar criterion is used as with PCL, though a higher level of baseball experience is expected, and a previous association with the team may also factor in the selection. While most managers have children on their teams, not all do nor is that a requirement. Like everyone involved with Palo Alto Little League, all managers are volunteers.

All managers are nominated by the League President and approved by the Board.

**Why don't you re-draft all teams each year?**

This has been discussed in the past at PALL Board meetings and at the national level, but has not been adopted.

**Why do players stay with the same team and managers in Majors?**

Little League International allows four specific methods for drafting players. One is the current PALL policy, where players remain on the same team the following year. This provides a sense of community amongst the players and parents, and enables Managers to develop players on a multi-year basis.

**Why don't you split Majors and PCL by age? For instance, 11/12s in Majors, 9/10s in PCL?**

We've found that skill evaluations are a much better way to ensure that players play in the appropriate league. Age is not the strongest indicator of skill level.

**How much playing time can my child expect?**

The minimum playing rules are that each player bats at least one time per game and plays two innings in the field. Any additional playing time is at the manager's discretion.

**What baseball age is my child?**

Whatever your child's age is as of April 30, 2010 determines your child's baseball age. For instance, a player born April 29, 2000 would be considered a Little League 10 this year; whereas a player born May 2, 2000 would be considered a Little League 9. Any child born after April 30, 2001, is not eligible for Majors or PCL.

An age calculator can be found here:

[http://www.littleleague.org/leagueofficers/Determine\\_League\\_Age/League\\_Age\\_Calculator.htm](http://www.littleleague.org/leagueofficers/Determine_League_Age/League_Age_Calculator.htm)

**How come my 12-year-old can't pitch in PCL?**

This is a rule at the International Little League level, and cannot be changed by PALL. The thinking behind the rule is that younger players who are not at the Majors skill level should not have to bat against 12-year-olds, due to safety considerations.

**What's this I hear about a pitch count?**

Little League International has instituted a pitch count program to protect players while also increasing the opportunities for more players to pitch throughout the season. Under the program, managers and scorekeepers count the specific number of pitches thrown by a player. These rules are now mandatory for every league playing under Little League rules.

More information can be found here:

<http://www.littleleague.org/media/newsarchive/2009/Sep-Dec/LLTournamentRegularSeasonPitchingRulesMadeSame.htm>

**What is the sibling option rule for Majors?**

This rule allows, but does not require, a manager to declare before the draft begins that he will use one of his available picks to take the sibling of a player currently on his team. There is a similar option for managers/coaches and their children.

**My child can't make Saturday (or Sunday) tryouts because of religious commitments.**

**What are my options?**

Please contact the appropriate player agent. However, for Majors, players need only to attend two tryouts and for PCL-only, they need only to attend one.