
Player Draft Procedure

Introduction

Little League is *not* based on club membership, like our weekend competitions. Players who register for Little League will be placed into a pool. Depending on how many players register, Hills will appoint the appropriate number of team managers for rosters of a minimum of 12 players per team¹.

The Managers participate in a Player Draft in broad compliance with Little League Rules. The result will be that the available players will be broken up into several teams which will be of a similar standard overall.

Note:- it is probable that players will find themselves in teams which bear no resemblance to their weekend club teams. The nature of the draft process seeks to equalise talent, not concentrate it in one team.

The draft process will not be published. Players will never know whether they were selected as an early or late pick in the draft.

Preliminaries

The Commissioner will collect data about registered players, and provide a list of this information to Managers at least one week before the Draft. This data will include:-

- Name
- Sex
- League Age
- Postcode of Residence
- Home Club
- Weekend Team if any (age-cohort & grade)
- Rep Team if applicable
- Preferred playing position
- Other playing positions
- Club team training day/time
- Club team coach/manager phone & email contact details
- Preferred weekday to play
- Weekdays when the player is unavailable for reasons other than club training.
- Friends who the player would like to be with.
- Availability during the January holidays

¹ Maximum legal roster size is 15. We prefer fewer rather than more.

This list will be broken up into three sections:- Northern Zone, Southern Zone and “Central Zone”.

Three Zones?

No, there's only two Zones, just as we always said:- North and South, split on the basis of residential postcode. However, the registrations are unbalanced:- we have too many in South and not enough in North. Combined with an apparent relaxation of the rules about *where* a child may play during the local season, we've decided to open up postcodes 2153 and 2154 to both North and South teams.

The Investigation Phase

LL Managers will then have at least a week to absorb the data about their available player pools. Managers in the Northern Zone will be able to select North and Central players. Managers in the Southern Zone will be able to select South and Central players.

Managers are encouraged to contact club coaches and rep coaches, and their own colleagues in their own club who may coach or officiate at weekend games in which the candidate players have participated this season. The more information you have about candidates, the better will be your selections in the Draft.

The Draft

The Draft itself will be conducted at a meeting of the Commissioner, a Clerk and the Managers².

The Commissioner will chair that meeting.

The Clerk will have a list of draft candidates, including all of the information provided to Managers. His/her job is to validate the picks (ie:- verify that an announced player is able to be legally selected by the Manager making the announcement) and then to record the picks.

The order of business shall be:

1. Select lots to determine the order of draft picking. The numbers 1 to 6 will be placed into a “hat” and Managers {blind} will choose a number from that hat. The Manager with Number 1 will be the first Manager to select a Draft pick: the one picking Number 2 shall be the second: and so on.
2. The Commissioner will then invite Manager #1 to announce a Draft pick.
3. The Clerk shall check the database and confirm that the announced player is available and legally capable of being selected by that Manager in accordance with the Draft Rules (below). S/he will then record the pick.
4. The Commissioner will then invite Manager #2 to announce a Draft pick. Step 3 above is repeated. This process continues until all Managers have announced their first picks.
5. The Commissioner will then invite Manager #1 to announce his/her next Draft pick. Step 3 above is repeated. Step 4 above is repeated for each Manager in turn. This process continues until all available players have been selected into a Team.

² If a Manager is unable to attend the Draft, s/he may nominate another person as their proxy.

6. After all players have been selected, the final step is an “Exchange Phase”, during which Managers may exchange players among their teams. This might be to find a better balance of player availability, to put friends with friends or other similar reasons. All players exchanged during this phase must be in the same Band as each other (see below).

The Clerk shall, as soon as possible thereafter, contact all players and provide them with the name and contact details of their Manager. S/he will also provide a Team List to the Manager, comprising the name, home address, telephone number, email address and parent/guardian name(s) {if available} of each player in their Team, in alphabetic order of surname.

The Clerk will also structure a second copy of the team lists for use by the Commissioner in allocating Loan Players (see below) should they be needed during the season. These lists will be in order of selection and will group the first four draft picks as Band 1, the second four as Band 2, and the remaining ones as Band 3.

Players not involved in the initial draft (ie those registering late) are ineligible to be used as Loan Players during the season. Paired Players (See Rule 2 below) are also ineligible to be Loan Players.

Draft Rules

1. Players who are related to a Manager or Coach are quarantined from selection by a different Team **PROVIDED THAT** the player is selected as the first pick by that Team’s Manager. If players are related to either the Manager or a Coach, or if there is more than one player related to the Manager or Coach or both, those players must be selected as the first picks by that Team’s Manager. Should a Manager select an unrelated player ahead of a related player, that related player becomes available for selection by other Teams and the quarantine dissolves.
2. **Paired Players:** At the discretion of the Commissioner, players may be paired with each other. An example might be where two siblings have registered to play and need to be in the same team. Another might be a child who must be paired with another for transport or logistic reasons. Any such pairing will be included in the player data presented to coaches before the Draft.

Note 1: The first time a Manager picks a player so paired, s/he will use his/her current Draft pick plus his/her 12th pick (for the second player). If he chooses another paired player, s/he will use his/her current pick plus his/her 11th pick for that second player, and so on. Players paired using this Rule will not be available to other teams as Loan Players.

Note 2: The Commissioner will only pair *unrelated* players if s/he is satisfied that the overall team balance of ALL teams will be unaffected. Such a decision will also consider the likely impact if equally-matched but high-level players are paired.

Note 3: In extraordinary circumstances, players might be “tripled” (ie:- three players considered as one pick). This will only be allowed for siblings from one household.

3. If a Manager announces an illegal pick (eg:- a player not in the right Region for that Manager, or of the wrong age for that stage of the Draft), the Clerk shall say so and the Manager shall announce a different player.

4. Players shall be selected in a particular order. All players aged 12 are to be selected first in the Draft, followed by those aged 11, then those aged 10, then those aged 9 (**EXCEPTION:** Subject to Rule 1).
5. Any Team which does not end up with at least 12 players at the end of a Draft involving six teams (because less than 72 are in the pool) will have first pick of any late registrations. The order of those picks will be the same "Order of Draft Picking" from Page 2. Once all Teams have a roster of 12 or more, any late registrations will be distributed to Teams by the Commissioner at his/her discretion.

Guidance

Managers may use any thought-process they like to select players within the Rules. However, here are some issues you may like to consider ...

- Team balance is important. It might be tempting to just select rep players ahead of everyone else, or perhaps older players ahead of young ones (subject to Rule 4, of course). However, a well-balanced team will usually beat one that is not. Try to get your starting battery first, then a couple of relief pitchers or alternate starters, and only then start to think about hitters. Picking good field players should be your last priority.
- Have a plan. When looking at the pool, try to guess which of your preferred players will be picked by somebody else. You only get a pick once every six players. There's no point in having a list of the top 12 players in your Zone:- you won't get them.
- Consider that rep players will probably play fewer games for you than non-reps. Any LL game scheduled will be the last priority for players:- behind rep games, rep training and club training. Similarly, many Division 1 teams train twice a week and their players probably won't be available for some games before the weekend playoffs. Club coaches will want their players at training, especially if they're in the playoffs and during the Hills Finals Series dates. There's no point in having a team stacked with high-level players if they aren't available to you.
- In filling gaps, have a look at the current Hills Standings. Is there a good player in a team that has no chance of making the playoffs? Or one in a team that might get there but is unlikely to progress to the Grand Final? If you can find a kid like this, s/he will be "more available" for your LL team than his/her peer in a team that looks like it will be in three playoff games.
- Some kids are not playing in a rep team by choice or circumstance, not because they weren't good enough to be selected. Those who've joined a Hills club this season from elsewhere were ineligible to trial. Some are not available on Sundays for rep duty. Some simply choose not to trial for whatever reason. If you can discover these "diamonds in the rough", you'll handle the Draft better than your colleagues who do not.
- Consider what the kids want. If you have Johnny in your team already, and there's two others available that you can't split on other criteria (one of whom has asked to be with Johnny), then pick him. Put friends with friends where you can, although nobody expects you to do so at the expense of your team strength.
- Consider the weekdays that players have declared as being unavailable to them. Don't end up with a team where you have eight players unavailable on Tuesdays, or you might find you don't have a team at all for a game scheduled for a Tuesday.

- Carefully consider paired players. Maybe your first reaction is “I don’t want Johnny if I have to take his little brother as well”. However, think about it. If Johnny is one of your top overall picks, all you cost yourself by selecting him is your 12th pick:- the price of taking little brother. After the top 66 kids have been selected, perhaps you would have ended up with little brother anyway? And perhaps NOT selected Johnny in the meantime? Both kids in a “package-deal” might actually be good value if the second one is *not the last* you would otherwise select.

Tournament Teams

At the end of our local Little League competition, Hills will select two Tournament Teams from the players who participated. These teams will play others from Sydney and Country NSW for the right to represent our state at the National Little League Championship tournament. If successful, they’ll move on to the Asia-Pacific tournament and maybe ultimately to the USA Little League World Series.

The mechanism for selection of the Tournament Teams will be by a closed meeting of the Tournament Team Committee On March 14th (Thursday), comprising:-

- The Hills President
- The Hills Competition Secretary
- The Hills Little League Commissioner
- The Hills U/14 SJC Head Coach
- The Hills U/12 SJC Head Coach

Tournament Coaches will be selected at the same time by that Committee.

Reserves

Any players who want to register after the Draft, and after the Commissioner has closed registrations, will be considered “Reserves”. We will take and record their details, but will only offer them a roster place in the event that a registered player drops out during the season. Any such offer is at the sole discretion of the Commissioner, whose first criteria shall be to ensure the team balance is not unduly affected. No Reserves will be offered places during the final two weeks of the season.

Miscellaneous

At, before, or as soon as possible after the Draft, the Commissioner will provide each Manager with:-

- Two copies of the LL Inc “Green Book”.
- Eighteen game balls.
- A scorebook.