

## New Little League Tournament Rule – Illegal Equipment

This document is intended to serve as clarification on the implementation of the new illegal equipment tournament rule in both the district and state tournaments and how this differs from use of an illegal bat.

### Baseball Tournament Rule 3.g. and Softball Tournament Rule 3.h.

Umpires are not required to inspect equipment prior to the start of the game. The managers of both teams will confirm with the umpire(s) at the plate conference that all equipment is proper and legal according to Little League Rules.

**PENALTY:** If illegal equipment is used during the game, the manager of the team will be removed for the remainder of the International Tournament, the player who used the illegal equipment will be ejected from the game.

Illegal equipment includes devices that are non-Little League approved, e.g., Grip-N-Rip Bat Tapers, skull caps, non-NOCSAE helmets, etc. If this equipment is in the dugout or if a player enters the field with such devices, then Tournament Rule 3.g./3.h. has been violated.

Cracked helmets or the absence of a “dangler” on the catcher’s mask, if discovered during a game, should be addressed immediately with removal of such from the field of play and dugout. There is no penalty for this, but the incident shall be taken as a warning. If this improper equipment returns to the dugout or is used on the field of play, then this incident becomes an “illegal equipment” issue and the appropriate consequences applied.

Note, however, the above differs from consequences from the use of an illegal bat. Baseball and softball bats must meet Rule 1.10. Those that do not are illegal bats. In instances where the manager believes a particular bat is legal, it is his/her responsibility to immediately provide evidence of their claim. If this evidence is not provided, the judgement of the umpire stands. The consequences of using an illegal bat fall within Tournament Rule 3.b.

### Baseball and Softball Tournament Rule 3.b.

In all Tournament levels and divisions, the penalty for use of an illegal bat [see Rule 6.06 (d)], if discovered before the next player enters the batter’s box following the turn at bat of the player who used an illegal bat, is:

- i. The batter is out (NOTE: The manager of the defense may advise the plate umpire of a decision to decline this portion of the penalty and accept the play. Such election shall be made immediately at the end of the play), and;
- ii. The manager of the team will be ejected from the game, the batter who violated the rule will be ejected from the game, and the offensive team will lose one eligible adult base coach for the duration of the game.

The illegal bat shall be removed from the game. Should it return to the dugout or used again, the situation now becomes an issue of “illegal equipment” and the appropriate consequences applied.

To help further the understanding of these rules, managers and coaches are highly encouraged to review the following resources:

- What managers and coaches need to know when checking equipment:  
[https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/5-need-to-knows-for-tournament-coaches/?utm\\_source=coachs+box+june&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=knows+tournament+coaches+headline+link](https://www.littleleague.org/university/articles/5-need-to-knows-for-tournament-coaches/?utm_source=coachs+box+june&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=knows+tournament+coaches+headline+link).
- 2025 Tournament Rules Briefing (15-Minute Video):  
<https://www.littleleague.org/videos/2025-tournament-rules-briefing/>