POOL PLAY FORMAT
GENERAL GUIDELINES

- The Pool Play Format should only be used in divisions in which there is a reasonable expectation for all teams to play all games for which they are scheduled. In divisions in which teams traditionally drop out at the last moment, or partway through the tournament, the standard double-elimination or single-elimination formats should be used.
- In the event a team or teams drop out of a pool play format tournament before the first game of the tournament is played, the pools must be redrawn. If a team or teams drop out after the first game is played, the matter must be referred to the Tournament Committee for a decision.
- A Pool Play Format tournament may have one or more pools.
- The pool assignments (or "draw") must either be a blind draw, or must be based on geographic considerations.
- In all cases, the results of Pool Play have no bearing on the next segment of play, with the exception of rules and regulations regarding rest periods for pitchers, (i.e., losses do not "carry over").
- It is preferable for each team in a given pool to play all other teams in that pool once.
- In the case of a one-pool tournament, one team may advance to become the tournament champion, based solely on the results of pool play. More commonly, however, two teams advance in a one-pool tournament to play each other for the tournament championship. If two teams advance out of a one-pool tournament, the playoff may consist of a standard single or double elimination format.
- If more than one pool is used, and the total number of teams in both pools combined is less than ten (10), the largest pool must be no more than one team larger than the smallest pool. *Example*:

Acceptable		Not Acceptable	
Pool A	**Pool B**	**Pool A**	**Pool B**
4 teams	5 teams	3 teams	6 teams

  If more than one pool is used, and the total number of teams in both pools combined is ten (10) or more, the largest pool must be no more than two teams larger than the smallest pool. *Example*:

Acceptable		Not Acceptable	
Pool A	**Pool B**	**Pool A**	**Pool B**
4 teams	6 teams	3 teams	7 teams

- In the case of tournaments involving more than one pool, one or two teams may advance out of each pool to the next segment. In most cases, when two teams advance, the schedule may be set up so that teams will "cross over" for the purpose of seeding in the next round. (The crossover method, however, is not required). For example, in a two-pool tournament:
    * The first-place team in Pool A plays second-place team in Pool B.
    * The first-place team in Pool B plays second-place team in Pool A.
    * The winners of those games play each other for the championship.
- In the case of tournaments involving more than one pool, the playoff format may be single or double-elimination.
- The tiebreaker methods published by Little League Baseball International are the only methods that will be used when a tiebreaker is required. If any question or controversy arises, it must be referred to the Regional Headquarters before advancing a team.

- All tournament formats must be approved by the Regional Headquarters before publication or implementation. Tournament formats are not valid until this approval is received.

TIEBREAKER PROCEDURE

Under this format, there are two distinct segments to a tournament: **Segment 1 – The Pool Play Round**, and **Segment 2 – The Elimination Round**.

Once a segment is completed, games played previously have no bearing on the next segment, with the exception of rules and regulations regarding rest periods for pitchers. The Tournament Director determines which option below will be used.

In **Segment 1 – The Pool Play Round**, the teams are divided into a number of pools (usually two to four pools). Each team in each of the pools will play the other teams in that pool once. In **Tournament Option A**, the *one* team with the best record in the pool advances to the next segment. In **Tournament Option B,** the *two* teams with the best records in each pool advance to the next segment. In **Tournament Option C**, all teams in each pool with specific records (i.e., teams with zero losses, teams with one loss or less, teams with two losses or less, etc.) will advance to the next segment. This option may ***only*** be used when all teams in all pools have played the same number of games in Segment 1.

In **Segment 2 – The Elimination Round**, the teams advancing out of **Segment 1** are matched up in either a standard single-elimination format, or a standard double-elimination format. *

In all cases, one of the "Elimination Procedures" detailed herein must be used.

Elimination Procedure A (one team advancing per pool)

If, after the completion of games in Segment 1:

I. *one* team has the best won-lost record in its pool, then that team will advance to the next segment.
II. *two* teams are tied with the best won-lost records in their pool, then the winner of the pool play game previously played between those two teams will advance to the next segment.
    A. If the two teams above did not play each other during pool play, then the *Runs Allowed Ratio* will be computed to determine which *one* of the two teams will advance to the next segment.
III. *three or more* teams are tied with the best won-lost records in their pool…
    A. and one of the three or more tied teams has defeated each of the other tied teams during pool play, then that team will advance to the next segment.
    B. and one of the three or more tied teams has *not* defeated each of the other tied teams during pool play, then the *Runs Allowed Ratio* will be computed to determine which *one* of the three or more teams will advance to the next segment.

Elimination Procedure B (two teams advancing per pool)

If, after the completion of games in Segment 1:

I. *two* teams have the best won-lost records in their pool, then those teams will advance to the next segment.
    A. If the two teams advancing are tied with identical records, then the "top seed" from that pool (for the purpose of placement in the next segment), will be the winner of the pool play game

previously played between those two teams. If the two teams are advancing to play each other in the next segment, seeding is not necessary.

B. If the two teams advancing are tied with identical records, and the two teams did not play each other during pool play, then the "top seed" from that pool (for the purpose of scheduling for the next segment), will be the team with the lowest *Runs-Allowed Ratio* for all games played by the two teams in pool play. If the two teams are advancing to play each other in the next segment, seeding is not necessary.

C. If the two teams advancing are still tied after calculating the *Runs-Allowed Ratio,* a coin flip by the Tournament Director or his/her designate will determine the "top seed" from that pool (for the purpose of scheduling for the next segment). If the two teams are advancing to play each other in the next segment, seeding is not necessary.

II. *three or more* teams are tied with the best won-lost records in their pool…

A. and *one* of the three or more tied teams has defeated each of the other teams involved in the tie during pool play, that *one* team will advance to the next segment.

  i.   This leaves *two or more* teams tied for the *one* remaining berth in the next segment.

  ii. If one of the two or more teams still tied has defeated each of the other teams involved in the tie during pool play, then that *one* team will advance to the next segment.

  iii. If one of the two or more teams still tied has not defeated each of the other teams involved in the tie during pool play, then the *Runs-Allowed Ratio* will be computed to determine which *one* of the teams will advance to the next segment.

B. and one of the three tied teams has *not* defeated each of the other teams involved in the tie during pool play, then the *Runs-Allowed Ratio* will be computed to determine which *one* of the teams will advance to the next segment.

  i.   This leaves *two or more* teams tied for the *one* remaining berth in the next segment.

  ii. If one of the two or more teams still tied has defeated each of the other teams involved in the tie during pool play, then that *one* team will advance to the next segment.

  iii. If one of the two or more teams still tied has not defeated each of the other teams involved in the tie during pool play, then the *Runs-Allowed Ratio* will be computed to determine which *one* of the teams will advance to the next segment.

III. *one* team has the best won-lost record in its pool, then that team will advance (as the top seed from its pool) to the next segment, and,

A. *one* team has the second-best won-lost record in its pool, then that team also will advance to the next segment.

B. *two* teams are tied with the second-best won-lost records in their pool, then the winner of the pool play game previously played between those two teams will advance to the next segment.

  i.   If the two teams that are tied with the second-best won-lost records in their pool did not play each other during pool play, then the *Runs-Allowed Ratio* will be computed to determine which *one* of the teams will advance to the next segment.

C. *three or more* teams are tied with the second-best won-lost records in their pool…

  i.   and *one* of the three or more tied teams has defeated each of the other teams involved in the tie during pool play, that *one* team will advance to the next segment.

  ii. and one of the three or more tied teams has *not* defeated each of the other teams involved in the tie during pool play, then the *Runs-Allowed Ratio* will be computed to determine which *one* of the teams will advance to the next segment.

# Elimination Procedure C (three teams advancing per pool)

If, after the completion of games in Segment 1:

I. *three* teams have the best won-lost records in their pool, then those teams will advance to the next segment.
    A. If the three teams advancing are tied with identical records, then the seeding from that pool (for the purpose of placement in the next segment), will be based on the won-lost records in games involving only the three teams, provided all three teams played the other two teams involved during pool play.
    B. If the three teams advancing are tied with identical records, and all three teams did not play the other two teams during pool play, then the seeding from that pool (for the purpose of scheduling for the next segment), will be based on the *Runs-Allowed Ratio* for all games played by the three teams in pool play, with the team with the lowest *Runs-Allowed Ratio* receiving the first seed, and the team with the second-lowest *Runs-Allowed Ratio* receiving the second seed.
    C. If two of the three teams advancing are still tied after calculating the *Runs-Allowed Ratio,* a coin flip by the Tournament Director or his/her designate will determine the seeds from that pool (for the purpose of scheduling for the next segment).
    D. If all three teams advancing are still tied after calculating the *Runs-Allowed Ratio,* then the Tournament Director or his/her designate will conduct a blind draw for seeding among the three teams.
II. *four or more* teams are tied with the best won-lost records in their pool, and all teams involved in the tie have played all of the other teams involved in the tie, the three teams with the best won-lost records in games played only among those tied teams will advance.
III. *four or more* teams are tied with the best won-lost records in their pool, and all teams involved in the tie have not played all of the other teams involved in the tie,
    A. the teams advancing will be based on the *Runs-Allowed Ratio* for all games played by the four or more tied teams in pool play, with the three teams with the lowest *Runs-Allowed Ratio* advancing.
        i. If a tie still exists between the four or more teams after computing the *Runs-Allowed Ratio,* then the ratio will be re-computed for each team involving only those opponents all the teams had in common.
        ii. If a tie still exists between the four or more teams after re-computing the *Runs-Allowed Ratio,* then the matter will be referred to the Tournament Committee for a decision. When it is possible, in the opinion of the Tournament Committee, a playoff will determine which teams will advance. However, the Tournament Committee reserves the right to use a blind draw to determine which teams will advance.

Computing the Runs-Allowed Ratio

For each team involved in a tie, calculate: The total number of runs given up in *all* pool play games, divided by the number of half-innings played on defense by that team in those games. This provides the number of runs given up per half-inning by that team: the **Runs-Allowed Ratio**.

Example: The Hometown Little League team has given up 8 runs in all four of its pool play games, and has played 23 innings on defense in those four games.

Number of half-innings played on defense

Number of runs allowed	→ **8 divided by 23 equals .3478** ←	*Runs-Allowed Ratio*
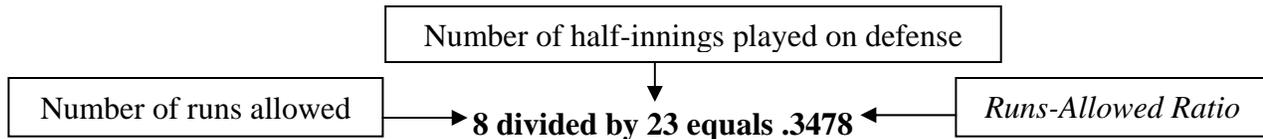
The **Runs-Allowed Ratio** for Hometown Little League (.3478 in the example above) is compared to the same calculation for each of the teams involved in the tie.

Note 1: If a team plays any part of a half-inning on defense before a game is ended, that will count as a full half-inning on defense for the purposes of computing the defensive run ratio.

Note 2: If a game is forfeited, in most cases the score of the game is 6-0 (for Little League and 9-10-Year-Old Division) or 7-0 (for Junior League, Senior League and Big League). For the purposes of calculating the *Runs-Allowed Ratio*, in most cases each team involved in a forfeit will be deemed to have played six innings (for Little League and 9-10-Year-Old Division) or seven innings (for Junior League, Senior League and Big League). However, forfeits and the final score can only be decreed by action of the Tournament Committee in Williamsport.

Note 3: A manager is not permitted to purposely forfeit any game for the purpose of engineering the outcome of pool play, and may be removed from the tournament by decision of the Tournament Committee for such action. Additionally, the Tournament Committee may remove such team from further tournament play. Only the Tournament Committee can forfeit any game in the International Tournament, and reserves the right to disregard the results of a forfeited game in computing a team's won-lost record and *Runs-Allowed Ratio*.

Note 4: When a manager instructs his or her players to play poorly for any reason, such as, but not limited to: 1. Losing a game to effect a particular outcome in a Pool Play Format tournament; 2. To facilitate, by intentional poor play, a game from being won or lost by the 10-run rule, etc., such action may result in the manager's removal by the umpire-in-chief, and/or removal of the team from further tournament play by the Tournament Committee. (Note: This policy is not intended to prevent a manager from using lesser-skilled players more frequently if he or she wishes, even if such use may result in losing a game.)

Note 5: In all cases, if the tie-breaking principles herein fail to break the tie, then the matter will be referred to the Tournament Committee, which will be the final arbiter in deciding how the tie will be broken. When possible, in the opinion of the Tournament Committee, a playoff will determine which teams will advance. However, the Tournament Committee reserves the right to use a blind draw or coin flip to determine which teams will advance.

* - In a few tournaments, generally in the International Regions, the champion is solely determined by Segment 1, and there is no playoff.