



MEMBER OF 2013 LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES CHALLENGER DIVISION TEAM.

LITTLE LEAGUE
SINCE 1958
Bartlett
Challengers

Celebrating 20 years in Challenger Baseball

**SPECIAL NEEDS LITTLE LEAGUE
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS!**

**PARENTS, SIGN YOUR KIDS UP!
LEAGUES ARE FORMING NOW!**

**THE BARTLETT LITTLE LEAGUE
CHALLENGER DIVISION PROVIDES THE
FRAMEWORK TO ENABLE BOYS AND
GIRLS WITH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL
DISABILITIES TO ENJOY A
STRUCTURED ATHLETIC ACTIVITY.
AGES 4-18 OR UP**

BARTLETT LITTLE LEAGUE
Challenger Division

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BARTLETT BASEBALL & SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

CHALLENGER DIVISION - INFORMATION

The Challenger Division was established in 1989 as a separate division of Little League International baseball to enable boys and girls with physical and mental disabilities, to enjoy the game of baseball along with the millions of other children who participate in this sport worldwide.

The Bartlett Challenger Division of Little League is a program that was started in 1994 for mentally and physically challenged youth, helping them to enjoy the full benefit of Little League participation in an athletic environment structured to their abilities. More than the skills of baseball learned through the experience, the value of the Bartlett Little League Challenger Division is found in the proven therapeutic and socialization benefits of participating in sports, the strengthening of participants' self-esteem, the opportunities to mainstream into other divisions of play, and the disciplines of teamwork, sportsmanship and fair play, which are hallmarks of the Little League program. The Bartlett Little League Challenger Division plays with the same equipment on the same fields as the rest of the league. Challenger Division participants have the opportunity to experience the joys of pulling together as a team, being cheered, and earning awards for their achievements.

The Special Rules of the Challenger Division and Senior Division

- In 2015 we have **TWO** divisions to choose from our traditional Challenger Division and our new Senior Division.
 - **Our Challenger Division**: is for children and young adults' ages 4 through 18 with physical or mental disabilities are encouraged to participate.
 - **Our Senior Challenger Division**: players can start at age 15 with no maximum age with physical or mental disabilities are encouraged to participate.
 - Note: players ages 15 to 18 can play in either the regular Challenger Division or the Senior Division.
- Teams can include as many as 10 to 15 players. Players can participate in one of three levels: Tee Ball, Coach-Pitch, and Player-Pitch. Each player in Tee Ball and Coach-Pitch may use the "Buddy" system; however, it is not mandatory.
- Bartlett Little League uses the "Buddy" system, pairing participants who need extra help with members of the Bartlett Little League, sports teams from Schaumburg, Bartlett, and surrounding communities along with groups looking to make a difference.
- Every player on the roster is in the batting order and shall play defensively for the entire game.
- No team is scheduled to play more than one game in one day. The side is retired when the offense has batted through the roster.
- Bartlett Little League Challengers does not keep score during the games. However, in the future we may have parameters for players who could play independently within our divisions that would allow us to keep score.
- Challenger Division players wear the same uniforms, shoulder patches, and safety equipment as other mainstream Bartlett Little League players.

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Questions about the Challengers Program

What is the Challenger program? The Challenger Division and Senior Challenger Division offer boys and girls with physical and mental challenges, the opportunity to participate in an organized game of baseball. The most fundamental goal of the Challenger Division is to give everyone a chance to play.

What is the Bartlett Challengers League? Bartlett Little League is a local Little League serving the Bartlett area. We have an enrollment of over 700 players from the ages of 4-18 with over 50 baseball teams. We are affiliated with Little League International. The Bartlett Little League ***Challengers program is open to any child of special needs regardless of town boundaries.*** We have had children and young adults from Bartlett, Carol Stream, Elgin, Elk Grove Village, Hanover Park, Huntley, Lombard, Naperville, Roselle, Schaumburg, South Elgin, Wayne, and Winfield to name a few. Bartlett Little League is proud of our Challenger history, to be part of Little League's Illinois District 13 which has shown itself as a leader in Challenger baseball with its overwhelming commitment to this program, and we are extremely proud to continue to be part of the solution for our community as one of the oldest running Challenger leagues in the Chicagoland area. The Bartlett Little League Challenger division participated in the 2013 Little League World Series Challenger Exhibition game in Williamsport, PA August 24, 2013 that was seen on ESPN 3.

How does the program work? The program pairs Challenger teams and teams from within Bartlett Little League, sports teams from Schaumburg, Bartlett, Elgin and surrounding communities along with groups looking to make a difference. A "buddy" is assigned to each participant from our volunteer teams. The buddy is responsible for playing in the field with the Challenger participant and assisting him/her throughout the game. Activities include getting to know the participant, helping them play in the field, talking to them when they are in the dugout, helping them hit, moving them around the bases if needed and talking about the game after it is completed. In 2014 we had over 900 participate in our buddy support program.

What will BLL provide? Bartlett BLL will provide uniforms, playing fields, equipment, special events, end of the year trophy, after game hot dog, chips and pop, registration support and team assignments. Every player gets to keep their uniform.

What is the difference between the Challenger Division and Senior Division? The initial difference is the age breakout and a difference looking jersey. In 2015 both divisions will be setup with the same parameters as the Challenger Division has always been with full uniforms, buddy support players as required, 2 innings of play and after game snacks of hot dog, drink and chips. As we proceed with our first year of a Senior Division there could be some adjustment of the rules and parameters for the Senior Division if it is determined it will enhance the baseball experience for our participants.

Where are the games played? The games will be played on our regulation Bartlett baseball fields at Ruzicka field, with secondary fields at Kohler field.

What are the program costs? Each year the Bartlett Little League determines yearly fee to help offset costs of the program (usually well below the regular fees). Both the Challenger Division and Senior Division will have the same registration fee. If a family is in financial distress, Bartlett Little League has history in working with families in need. Bartlett Little League will never turn away a special needs child from playing.

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When does the program start /ends? Opening day is in late April through end of June or early July. Not including special event games we may be invited to play during or after our normal season (example: play exhibition game at a local district 13 and other districts tournaments, District 13 Challenger Jamboree, and our Bartlett Challenger annual Boomers Classic where we play a game before a Schaumburg Boomers game).

How many games will be played? Our normal season is about 10 games (not including special events) but due to rain dates it may be less. All attempts will be made to reschedule rain out games. The end of the regular season, we have end of the year party where participants socialize with their peers and receive their trophies.

Does your program conflict with Special Olympic eligibility and participation? No. Bartlett Little League Challenger Division actually **HIGHLY** encourages participation in Special Olympics programs. Many of our current and former players are Special Olympic athletes. Since our games are played weekends, this can conflict with some of Special Olympics local and state events which can mean missing some games and we understand.

I missed the general registration; can we sign up during the season? Yes, depending on if our teams are filled up and where we are at on the schedule we could possibly get you playing right away!

I am not sure if my child will like baseball / or my child does not know how to play baseball? No worries! We look at baseball as an avenue to allow growth of your child in ways that you may not have thought possible. Contact us and we will invite you to one of our games,

- We will give a tour of our fields.
- Explain how we play the games
- Introduce to some of the coaches and parents of the Challengers.
- Answer any of your questions.
- And one of the best things about the Challengers is that all the coaches and parents "understand", we are living with the same issues!

How can I tour when it is not baseball season? You can contact us via email at blchallengers@gmail.com and we can schedule a phone call, or visit our website www.blchallengers.org.

Can we volunteer to help? Absolutely! We are always looking for help in coaching, supplying buddy teams, helping around the fields support our "Play It Forward" baseball equipment program and in getting the word out about our Challenger program to the community at large. Who can I contact?

Paul Williams at blchallengers@gmail.com or call the Challenger hotline 630-233-4955.

Main League Information:

Bartlett Baseball and Softball Association (Bartlett Little League)
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www.bartlettbsa.com

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