

Baseball Bat Moratorium Overview & Background

Important Overview

A moratorium on the use of baseball bats with composite materials in the barrel was enacted by Little League. The moratorium was enacted because it was discovered, through laboratory testing, that a significant number of these bats could exceed the standard that is printed on the bat – after the bat was broken in.

By definition, a moratorium is: An authorized delay or stopping of some specified activity. As applied by Little League International in 2011, the moratorium prohibited the use of all baseball bats constructed with composite material in the barrel, unless a specific model could show in laboratory testing that it would not exceed the standard that was printed on the bat, after the bat was broken in.

The moratorium remains in place with regard to the baseball bats that meet **BOTH** of the following criteria:

1. Bats with a barrel diameter of not more than 2 1/4 inches, and;

2. Bats with a barrel that contains composite materials, excluding the end-cap.

For the bats that meet the two criteria above, there is a process through which manufacturers can submit individual models for a possible waiver if they wish to seek it. Individual bat models are tested at an independent laboratory as requested by the manufacturer, and the results are conveyed to the manufacturer. If the manufacturer provides the results to Little League, and the bat passes the test, it will be noted.

The moratorium for 2 1/4-inch barrel bats does NOT include:

- 1. Softball bats, or;
- 2. Baseball bats with barrels composed entirely of wood, aluminum, alloy, or metal, exclusive of the end cap.

For bats with 2 5/8-inch barrels, the following will apply for the Junior League Baseball Division and Intermediate (50/70) Baseball Division.

- 1. Bats with composite materials in the barrel must be compliant with BBCOR standards, and must be labeled as such;
- 2. Bats with barrels composed entirely of wood, metal, aluminum, or alloy (exclusive of the end cap) are NOT required to be BBCOR compliant. These bats may be 2 1/4" in diameter (non-composite barrel) and must be marked with BPF 1.15 notation.
- 3. Bats must meet the standards noted in Rule 1.10 for length, diameter, etc.

Background on the 2011 Decision to Enact the Moratorium

On Dec. 30, 2010, Little League International announced it had expanded its moratorium on the use of composite-barreled bats to all of its baseball divisions, including the Little League (Majors) division.

In the weeks and months leading up to that, Little League International provided frequent updates on this issue through millions of e-mail messages to those who had signed up for alerts, as well as through the media, and on Little League's Facebook fan sites.

Several months earlier, a similar moratorium was enacted on composite-barreled bats used in the Junior, Senior and Big League Baseball Divisions.

"The moratorium was not the result of Little League changing its bat standards, nor was it influenced by any relationships with bat manufacturers," Patrick W. Wilson, Vice President of Operations at Little League International, said. "The decision to place the moratorium on composite bats in Little League's baseball divisions was based solely on the fact that scientific research showed that composite-barreled bats may exceed the performance standard that is printed on the bats, after the bats had been broken in. Until that research was in hand there was no data to support an earlier decision.

"For the same reason, a delay or phase-in period for existing composite bats would have been the wrong decision. A delay or phase-in would mean we would have allowed bats to be used, after we had data from laboratory research to show such bats exceed the standard printed on the bat."

Little League International first placed the moratorium on composite bats in the Junior, Senior, and Big League Baseball Divisions of Little League. Subsequent to that moratorium, scientific research that began on October 18, 2010, showed the need for the same moratorium on composite-barreled bats with 2 1/4 inch barrels as well. Starting in September, and throughout the following weeks, this information was conveyed multiple times to every local Little League, every district, to the media, on Facebook, on the Little League web site, and to more than 250,000 parents who had signed up to receive updates from Little League International.

The original announcement regarding the moratorium, enacted on September 1, 2010, is here: <http://www.littleleague.org/media/newsarchive/2010/Sep-Dec/CompositeBatMoratium.htm>

Q-10: What is the standard for composite-barreled 2 5/8 inch bats in the Junior League and Intermediate (50/70) Baseball Divisions?

A: All composite-barreled bats for use in the Junior League and Intermediate (50/70) Baseball Divisions must meet the BBCOR standard. This is the implementation of the rule Little League provided in the rule books starting in 2010.

Q-11: Can a bat with a 2 1/4 inch barrel be used in Junior League Baseball and Intermediate (50/70) Baseball Division?

A: Yes, but not all 2 1/4 inch bats can be used. If a bat has no composite materials in it, it may be used in the Junior League Baseball and the Intermediate (50/70) Baseball Divisions, provided it is labeled with a BPF (bat performance factor) of 1.15 or less, and meets the standards for length, handle diameter, etc. (NOTE: Solid wooden barrel bats do not require a BPF label) But if the bat has composite materials in it, a 2 1/4-inch barrel MAY NOT be used; only a 2 5/8-inch BBCOR bat may be used.

Q-12: Can we use a 2 5/8-inch composite barrel bat that was on the waived list in 2011, but does not have the BBCOR printing on it?

A: No. All 2 5/8" non-wood bats (regardless of whether they are metal or composite) must have the BBCOR certification mark on them, for use in the Senior League and Big League Baseball Divisions. Additionally, all composite-barreled bats for use in the Junior League Baseball Division and Intermediate (50/70) Baseball Division must meet the BBCOR standard. This is the implementation of the rule Little League provided in the rule books starting in 2010.

Q-13: Are wood bats OK for use?

A: Yes. Wood bats have always been acceptable for use in all divisions, provided the individual bat meets the specifications and standards for the division of play, as noted in Rule 1.10.