

The Little League Pledge

The Little League Pledge was written by Peter J. McGovern, the late president of Little League Baseball, in 1954. It made its first appearance in the February 1955 “Little Leaguer” magazine. Its text has remained unchanged in the half-century since then. The Little League Pledge was drafted after Mr. McGovern became aware that local Little League programs were reciting the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance before games. Mr. McGovern wanted to give all leagues (not just those in the United States) a pledge reflecting some of the sentiments of the Pledge of Allegiance, minus the references to the U.S., while adding the elements of sportsmanship and the desire to excel. The text of the Little League Pledge was sent to U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower on Feb. 22, 1955. President Eisenhower (and every president since then) was a strong supporter of Little League. In a response by letter to Mr. McGovern a few days later, President Eisenhower said: “Thank you for...sending me the inspiring and fine pledge that, I understand, will now be repeated at the start of the Little League Baseball games. I am always glad to hear the plans and activities of Little League.”

Pledge

I trust in God
I love my country
And will respect its laws
I will play fair
And strive to win
But win or lose
I will always do my best

Today, local Little League programs sometimes choose to recite the Little League Pledge at the start of the season, and some recite it before every game. It is printed on the backs of the Little League rule books. Some local leagues also choose to play or sing the National Anthem of the country in which the game is played. Others may add a prayer to ceremonies.

Whether to recite the Little League Pledge, play or sing the National Anthem, or say a prayer, is entirely up to the local league’s board of directors. While many local leagues and districts include a recitation of the Little League Pledge in ceremonies, it is not, and has never been, required to be recited by any person involved with Little League Baseball or Softball.