

2020 USSSA Youth Slo-Pitch Softball Program

If a rule is not specifically mentioned here, please refer to the Adult rule book for guidance / application.

NOTE: Impacts from the New SafeSport legislation are continually under discussion. Updates will be posted as information becomes finalized. For more information on this new National legislation, please visit: <https://ussa.com/safesport>

In the meantime, all youth programs are expected to follow and incorporate any and all SafeSport guidelines provided. Including background checks on those personnel leading and coaching any youth teams / organizations. As a youth team is registered for the 2020 season, the head coach must submit for a background check. It is expected that in future seasons, additional bench personnel will also require background checks.

These rules are for Championship play. Local rule modifications are acceptable as long as player safety is not put to risk. Any specific local league / tournament rule modifications must be sent to National Office for prior approval.

USSSA Youth SLOW PITCH NATIONAL Management Team
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Sec. 1. The Youth Slow Pitch Program will be divided into the following age classifications, 6u - 21u**. A player's age on December 31 of the previous sanction year determines the age classification in which a player is eligible to participate. **Please note beginning with the 2020 Season, Boys youth will be limited to 17 and under**. Girls youth will continue to include up to 21u, but with restrictions noted below***. The Youth Playing season is also changing, starting the next season: August 1 - July 31. Roster age cutoff is still December 31 of the prior sanction year.**

** Boys Maximum eligibility age is the player must be no older than 17, as of December 31, of the prior sanction year. **

*** Girls 18 - 21 only ***

(To be within SafeSport compliance all players must be no younger than 18 and no older than 21, as of the Dec 31 cut off)

Age Divisions can be single year or Groupings can be formed to match overall participant levels to achieve enough players/teams to play. The below table reflects National Office recommendations.

Sec. 2. Any player can play in a higher age classification but cannot play in a lower age classification. Except the Girls 18-21u restriction.

Sec. 3. Entire teams can play in 2 categories. Not individual players. Except the Girls 18-21u restriction.

Sec. 4. The Youth Program is designed for Girls, Boys and Mixed Teams; however, the Boys' Program, Girls' Program and the Mixed Program should be entirely separate from each other.

Sec. 5. Youth Program field dimensions: (These are guidelines, minimal exceptions are acceptable for your local fields)

DIVISION (Player age determined as of Dec 31 of prior sanction year)	PITCHING	BASE PATH	PLAYING FIELD RADIUS (small deviations acceptable for all girl's events)
All Programs 6 - 8 Under	35' (Coach)	55' or 60'	150' - 200'
All Programs 9-10-11 Under	40'	65'	200' - 225'
All Programs 12-13-14 Under	46' or 50'	65'	200 - 250'
All Programs 15-16-17 Under	50'	65' or 70'	250' - 300'
**Girls ONLY 18-19-20-21 Under	50'	65' or 70'	250 - 300'
++ Note Double safety bases at	First Base	Are highly	Recommended-Required if local rules are in place

Sec. 6. A Team roster cannot be composed of more than 20 players. Tournament rosters must be online, with guardian approvals prior to event.

Sec. 7. The Catcher in all Youth age divisions, must wear an approved face mask and NOCSAE approved protective helmet (with dual ear flaps), and it is strongly recommended to wear a chest protector. All players are encouraged to wear any available approved protective equipment, for any positions. If an eye shield is worn, the phrase, "Meets NOCSAE Standard at the time of manufacture" must be permanently affixed to the face protector and it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission.

Sec. 8. All programs will use 11" USSSA Approved softballs, EXCEPT boys 13 and up in Boys and Mixed programs will use 12" USSSA Approved softballs. See adult rule book, page 13 for ball specifications.

Sec. 9. The Batter is out if he/she has three strikes, no courtesy foul allowed. The count starts 0-0.

- A. Third strike foul ball, batter is out, and dead ball is called. Exception: caught fly foul ball is live and runners can advance.
- B. The Batter is awarded First Base when three balls are called by the Umpire.

Sec. 10. In All Programs, non-duplicating numbers on all jerseys are required at all World Tournaments. The numbers must be a minimum of 3 inches tall.

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Sec. 11. Equipment: In the Youth program, NOCSAE approved batting helmets with extended ear flaps, which cover both ears and temples are mandatory for all batters, on deck batters, base runners, non-adult base coach. Batting helmets can be equipped with a NOCSAE-approved face protector. The phrase, "Meets NOCSAE Standard at the time of manufacture" must be permanently affixed to the face protector. If an eye shield is worn attached to the batting helmet, it must be constructed of a molded rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission. A chinstrap is optional.

Also, Shoes may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats only. Any other protectors than the standard shoe plate are prohibited. In all divisions, metal cleats and metal toe plates are prohibited and must be removed prior to playing.

Also, Jewelry. Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire as dangerous, is not permitted and must be removed. Medical alert items are not considered jewelry. If worn, they must be taped to the body so medical alert information remains visible. Flat, unadorned items with no sharp edges or points, such as bobby pins, barrettes, and hair clips (no longer than 2 inches) may be worn as hair control devices. Coaches wristbands (play indicators) are legal but must be worn as designed on the wrist.

Sec. 12. The Run Rule in the Youth Program awards a win to a Team that has a 15 run lead after 3 completed innings or 2 ½ innings if the Home team is ahead, or a 12 run lead after 4 completed innings, or 3 ½ innings if the Home Team is ahead, or 10 run lead after 5 completes innings or 4 ½ innings, if the Home Team is ahead. HR balls untouched over any outfield fence are unlimited in all divisions.

Run Rule and when to Flip/Flop the Home / Visiting team

Youth run rule	15 after 3	After 2nd
	12 after 4	After 3rd
	10 after 5	After 4th
Youth: Girls 8 & Under	12 after 4	After 3rd

Sec. 13. In the Youth Program a minimum of 9 players can start a Game. However, an out shall be declared when the tenth position in the lineup is scheduled to bat. A tenth player may be added to the tenth position any time before the end of a Game. Any Team that starts a Game with 10 or 11 or 12 players may drop to the minimum of nine players to finish the Game. (Roster batting is allowed in Non-Championship play). All vacant spot(s) in the lineup will be declared an out every time that lineup position is due to bat, unless it is due to an injury. See Sec 14. Also, see below for concussion / suspected concussion injury participation exception. If a Team starts with 9 or 10 players, they are not allowed to add the 11th or 12th player at a later time. Any player that leaves the Game for any reason may not return to the Game. Starters can re-enter one time in the same batting order. Exception: A player, who has left the Game under the blood rule, may return.

Note: A player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) consistent with a suspected concussion (or has been struck in the head/neck area with any significant force), shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play that day until cleared, in writing, by an appropriate health care professional. The medically written consent must be maintained by the Team Manager and State Director. NOTE: See USSSA policy regarding Federal, State and Local Law Concussions on page 66 of adult rule book.

Sec. 14. The following Courtesy Runner / Injury rule will be used in all divisions:

- A. Courtesy Runner is only allowed for injured batter/runner one time per player. Once the courtesy runner is used to complete the play, that injured player cannot return to the current game in progress. If substitutes are not available, the player available on the bench who is farthest away in the batting order (who made the Last Completed at Bat) is the determined runner.
- B. The Short-Handed rule will be allowed in Youth Slow Pitch when an injury has occurred to either an offensive batter/runner or a defensive player. This is only allowed for an injured player when the injury is severe enough that the player cannot continue. Under this situation, the team may play with one less player in the batting order without an out being taken. This injury exception can be allowed down to 9 active players. If a team is using the AH, then multiple injuries can be incurred without an out being taken when that player's batting spot comes around.

Sec. 15. No Courtesy runners are allowed in the Youth Program, with the exception of the injury rule in Sec 14 above.

- A. Courtesy Runner application in League Play and Non-Championship Tournament Play can be administered at the discretion of each Community League Director.

Sec. 16. A Coach, Player, attendant, or bench personnel shall not use tobacco products in any form in the confines of the playing field. PENALTY: The Umpire shall issue a Team warning to the Team involved, any subsequent offenders on that Team can be ejected.

Sec. 17. The Managers/Coaches of a USSSA Registered Slow Pitch Softball Team and the umpires of a USSSA Sanctioned Slow Pitch Softball game/tournament shall not allow anyone other than a Participant, Manager, Coach, or Trainer to be in the dugout, bench or the field of play during a sanctioned USSSA Slow Pitch Softball game/ tournament. Managers, Coaches, or Trainers, must be at least 18 years of age and be certified under SafeSport guidance. The violation or refusal to heed the warning shall be an immediate forfeiture of the game.

Sec. 18. Pitching requirements are covered in the adult rule book, Rule 6, starting on page 35.

Pitch release of 3' from point of release to a max arch of 10' is permitted and delivered with no Excessive Speed in the judgment of the umpire. See Adult rule book link: [USSSA Adult online rule book for guidance and reference](#) Click here for detailed explanations.

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Sec. 19. Batting details. Rule 7 of the Adult rule book, page 38. For Youth play, both feet must be within the confines of the batter's box before the pitch starts and when contact is made of the pitched ball. The batter will be called out, when either one or both of his feet are in contact with the ground COMPLETELY outside the lines of the batter's box (front or side) or when her foot is in contact with home plate while contact is made with the ball.

BATTER'S BOXES shall be provided (if possible) on either side of home plate, with the inside line of this box 6 inches from home plate and parallel to its sideline. The batter's box shall be 5-1/2 feet long, extending 3 feet forward and 2-1/2 feet toward the rear, measured from the center corner of home plate. The batter's box shall be 3 feet wide, thus forming a rectangle of 5-1/2 feet by 3 feet. The lines marking the batter's box are considered to be part of the batter's box.

Sec. 20. Specific Bat Markings: See Adult rule book, page 8 for complete details, including penalties. This is the only approved bat stamp marking. All other bats are illegal for USSSA play.



Sec. 21. Any use of socially offensive or vulgar language or obscene gestures will be grounds for immediate ejection. Applies to all participants: Players, Coaches, and Parents / Fans.

Sec. 22. When a defensive player clearly has the ball and is waiting for the runner and the runner deliberately and forcefully runs into the defensive player, the runner is declared out. The offender shall be ejected, the ball is dead and all other runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision.

Sec. 23. All Youth playing rules not specifically covered in this supplemental document shall be governed by the Adult Rules as outlined in Rules 1 through 14 of that published booklet.

Sec.24. League Rules may be modified at a local site to best fit participation if sent for approval by national director / Office.

Sec. 25. The following rules will be used in all 6 - 7 - 8 & Under Coach Pitch Program:

A. The Game will consist of 6 innings, with a "Run Rule" being declared if a Team is ahead by 12 runs after 4 innings (3-½ if the Home Team is ahead), or 8 runs after 5 innings (4-½ if the Home Team is ahead).

B. There will be no Infield Fly Rule in effect.

C. Each position in the batting order will be allowed at bat a maximum of once per inning. The end of an inning will be declared when either 3 outs are made or all Batters have batted one time.

D. Each Team will name a Coach to act as "Designated Pitcher" to pitch to their Team.

E. The Designated Pitcher may be changed at any time during the Game as long as another Coach takes that position, and the change is made without excessive delay of the Game.

F. The Designated Pitcher may carry a glove onto the field while pitching. It is to be used for his own protection only.

G. While pitching, the Designated Pitcher may not coach his/her own Team in any way. The Designated Pitcher may not distract the Defensive Players in any way, either by action(s) or verbally. Violations of this rule will result in the Designated Pitcher receiving one warning from the Umpire, and should a second violation occur, he would be removed from the designated pitching position for the remainder of the Game.

H. If the Designated Pitcher attempts to field/play the batted ball, or he is hit by the batted ball before it passes a Fielder a dead ball will be declared, the Batter Runner is called out, but the Runners may not advance.

I. Should the Designated Pitcher be hit by a thrown ball; the infraction constitutes interference. All play stops, the ball is declared dead, the most advanced Runner is called out, and remaining Base Runners must return to the last base touched unless forced to advance.

J. Before any pitch is delivered, a Defensive Player must be positioned parallel to the Pitcher's Plate, to the left or right of the Designated Pitcher, maintaining sufficient distance so not to interfere with the delivery of the pitch. Neither this Defensive Player nor any other Defensive Player in the Game, other than the Catcher, shall be positioned closer to Home Plate than the Pitcher's Plate. Any Defensive Player may move ahead of the pitcher's plate to field a ball once hit or thrown. There must be a line drawn in an arc from Foul Line to Foul Line at the pitching distance to indicate this distance.

K. Balls and Strikes will be called by the Umpire, although no base on balls will be awarded by the Umpire due to thrown pitches or intentional walks. The Batter will be allowed 3 strikes or 5 pitches to hit the ball in fair territory. If third strike results in a Foul Ball, the pitch is counted, but the Batter is not out. After 3 strikes or 5 pitches, the Batter is out.

L. Any pitch that does not meet the minimum 3 feet from the point of release requirement will be declared an ILLEGAL PITCH/DEAD BALL. The pitch counts as one of their 5 pitches.

M. If the Teams are tied after 6 innings of play, they will begin the next inning with the last Batter of the previous inning on second base and 2 outs.