Senior Softball Rules
Official Senior Softball Rules Adopted, Published and Distributed by

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PLAYING RULES
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1. GENERAL

1.1. These rules are sports specific to USSSA Senior Softball & GSL Senior Championship Series. Any rule not covered in these rules, will be covered in the USSSA Slow Pitch Rule Book. Found at http://www.usssa.com/slowpitch/slowpitch-rules-and-legal-info

1.2. These General Rules apply to Men's & Women's Senior programs. A separate document will be provided with rules regarding the Mixed Senior program (TBA).

1.3. Current Rules can be found at http://www.usssa.com/slowpitch/seniors/rules

1.4. **USSSA & GSL Dual Team Registration**

1.4.1. $75 annual team registration fee on-line.

2. EQUIPMENT

2.1. **Ball**

2.1.1. **MEN'S** - Any brand USSSA or GSL stamped USSSA Senior Softball, Pro-M, Classic-M balls.

2.1.2. **WOMEN'S** - USSSA or GSL stamped Classic-W ball.

2.2. **Bats**

2.2.1. Age groups 40+ and Above may use any bat Stamped 1.21 BPF Senior. It does not have to be USSSA stamped until they are available. However, it must be from a USSSA licensed manufacturer. May also use the USSSA 220 or 240 USSSA Stamped bats.

2.2.2. The 35 age group ONLY will be required to use the USSSA 220 or 240 stamped bats including 40+ years old players on a 35 age group roster and 40+ age group teams participating in a 35 age group event.

2.3. **Pitching Screen** - If used, any brand I-Screen can be used with dimensions up to 7ft height by 4ft wide.

2.4. **Safety Base (1st Base)** - Size as provided by the park if provided.

2.5. **Home Plate Mat** - Mat specs are 36″ long x 21″ wide and will cover or surround a standard 17-inch home plate. Plate and mat are one unit used for the purposes of balls and strikes and the force out at home.

3. TEAM AGE/CLASSIFICATIONS

3.1. **Age Divisions** - 35+, 40+, 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+, 70+

3.2. **Classifications** – Major Plus, Major, AAA, and AA in each age division. No AA division for all Women's age groups.

4. PLAYING FIELD

4.1. **Base Distance**

4.1.1. Bases shall be set at 70 feet. 65 feet is allowed if a park cannot set bases at 70 feet.

4.2. **Commitment Line**

4.2.1. A minimum six (6) foot commitment line shall be marked across and perpendicular to the foul line and placed thirty feet from home plate. Once a runner has crossed the commitment line he/she cannot return to third base and must continue home, can no long be tagged out by the defensive player, and the defensive player must touch the Home Plate Mat. The ball remains live.

4.3. **Pitching Area**

4.3.1. The pitching area is the width of the pitcher's plate up to six (6) feet behind the back edge of the pitcher's plate.

4.3.2. Pitcher using a pitching screen must toe the pitching plate when delivering the pitch.

4.4. **Scoring Plate/Line**

4.4.1. A base runner's foot down on or down past the scoring line or down on the scoring plate prior to the ball being received by a defensive player touching the Home Plate Mat results in the scoring of a run.

5. PLAYING RULES

5.1. **These rules are intended for NIT's, State Championships and our World Series. Local events (Qualifiers) may have local area specific rules that must be approved by the USSSA Senior Softball National Committee.**

5.2. **Batter** Starts with a 1-1 count. After two strikes, batted ball must be fair. There is no courtesy foul.

5.2.1. **Pitching Screen (only when screen is used)** - Any batted ball that hits the pitching screen will be treated as a foul ball. If a batter has one strike and hits a batted ball into the pitching screen, the strike total is now two strikes no foul ball to waste as-if the batter hit a foul ball. If a batter has two strikes and hits a batted ball into the pitching screen, the batter will be declared dead ball out due to "must be fair after two strikes" rule.

5.2.2. **Illegal Pitches** – Umpires shall verbally and visual call illegal pitches.

5.3. **Game Time Limits**

5.3.1. Bracket Games - A 60-minute time limit will be in effect for all games. After 60 minutes the teams will complete the inning they are in and play one more inning with the exception of a mercy is declared. If tied, the game will continue until a winner is determined.

5.3.2. Qualifier Championship Games - A 70-minute time limit will be in effect for Championship and IF necessary games. After 70 minutes the teams will complete the inning they are in and play one more inning with the exception of a mercy is declared. If tied, the game will continue until a winner is determined.

5.3.3. NIT & World Series Championship Games - The championship games and IF necessary games will not have a time limit. Mercy rule will be in effect.

5.3.4. **Home Team when Seeding into Bracket Play (NIT, State Championship & World Series ONLY)** - When pool play is used to seed teams into bracket play, in each Winner bracket game ONLY, the highest seeded team from pool play will be the home team with the exception of the Championship and IF games (see 5.3.5. & 5.3.6.). Loser bracket games will determine Home Team with a double coin-toss.

5.3.5. **Championship Game** - In the championship game, the team from the winner's bracket will be the home team.

5.3.6. **IF Game** - In an If Game is needed, home team will be determined by a double coin-toss.

5.4. **Home Plate Mat** will be used. It is a strike if the ball lands on the Home Plate Mat.

5.5. **Courtesy Runner (Unlimited)** - Any legal player on the team's roster can be a courtesy runner, but only once per inning.

5.6. **Run Limit Per Inning**

5.6.1. Major Plus=7, Major=5, AAA=5, AA=5

5.6.2. Last inning, unlimited runs are allowed

5.7. **Reentry Rule** - A starting player removed from the lineup may reenter the game one time. A substitute may not reenter the game after being removed.

5.8. **Mercy Rule** – **(ALL DIVISIONS)** If a team is behind 20 runs after four innings prior to the open inning, the game will be declared a mercy/completed game with no open inning and the team in the lead declared the winner.

5.9. **Flip Flop Rule** - The flip-flop rule will be invoked in any game when there is a 10-run differential in favor of the visiting team **at the start of the "open inning."** If the visiting team is ahead by ten or more runs, the home team will remain at bat and start a new at-bats (beginning their seventh or last inning at-bats), meaning all runners on base will return to the dugout. It will be an open inning. If the home team fails to tie or go ahead of the visiting team, the game ends and the visiting team wins. If the home team ties or goes ahead, the visiting team takes its turn at bat**.** If the game is declared a completed game due to a mercy, flip-flop rule will not apply since there will be no open inning.

5.10. **1st Base Safety Base** will be used when available and provided by the park.

5.10.1. On a force out the defender is required to tag the white base. The runner is required to tag the Safety Base.

5.10.2. Blocking the runner's path to the Safety Base is considered obstruction and the runner is awarded the base.

5.10.3. If a ball deflects foul on the 1st base side the Safety Base and Regular Base, the rule will be reversed and previous rules will

apply. The runner is required to tag the Regular Base and the defensive player will be required to tag the Safety Base.

5.11. **Sliding or Diving**

5.11.1. Players may not slide or dive into the Home Plate Mat or Scoring Plate/Line. If they do, they are called out.

5.11.2. Sliding or Diving into 1st base, 2nd base or 3rd base base is NOT an out.

5.12. **Commitment Line** will be used. See Rule 4.2.

5.13. **Scoring Plate or Line** will be used. See Rule 4.4.

5.14. **Pitching Rules**

5.14.1. Pitching arch will be a minimum of (six) 6 ft and a maximum of ten (10) ft from the ground. No faking of pitch will be allowed.

5.14.2. Pitcher may pitch up to 6 ft behind the pitching plate and must keep one foot within the width of the pitching plate, behind the front edge of the plate and within the 6 ft limit behind the plate.

5.14.3. A pitcher's area will be utilized.

5.14.4. If no pitching screen is used, pitchers are encouraged to wear a protective face mask that covers, at a minimum, the area of the face from above the eyes to the lower part of the chin while pitching. All pitchers must wear the mask consistent with the manufacturer's intended usage of their product.

5.14.5. **A pitching screen will be team optional**. Team must furnish their own screen only if the event director cannot provide a pitching screen.

5.14.6. **If pitching screen is used** - Pitcher using a pitching screen must toe the pitching plate when delivering the pitch.

5.14.7. **If pitching screen is used** – The pitcher can't touch the batted ball until another defensive player touches the ball first. Once another defensive player touches the batted ball, the pitcher may engage on defense.

5.14.8. **If pitching screen is used** - If the pitcher interferes with the batted ball, dead ball will be called, the batter will be awarded first base and runners will advance to the next base.

5.14.9. **If pitching screen is used** - Any batted ball hitting the screen will be a dead ball foul.

5.14.10. **If pitching screen is used** - Screen may not be moved once the first pitch of the inning is thrown. Pitching Screen placement may be no more than 3 feet toward Home Plate Mat from the pitcher's plate and must cover at least half the pitcher's plate "left to right" or "right to left".

5.14.11. **If pitching screen is used (EXCEPTIONS)** - (EXCEPTION) A new pitcher enters the game. (EXCEPTION) The screen is hit by a batted ball and it moves and needs to be readjusted. (EXCEPTION) The screen is moved inadvertently by a defensive player during a play and needs to be readjusted.

5.15. **Safety Equipment**

5.15.1. All players, including pitchers, are encouraged to wear the recommended additional protective safety gear, comprised of head gear (NOCSAE approved), heart/chest protection and shin guards. Players are not required to wear the recommended protective gear.

5.15.2. USSSA makes NO warranty as to the protective qualities of any mandated or recommended safety equipment when used in softball, which may have inherent risks as an impact sport. USSSA does not make any specific claims as to any safety equipment's performance and will not accept any liability for personal injury. Players can still suffer serious injury while wearing any type of protective gear.

5.16. **Defensive Players**

5.16.1. Age 70+ will be allowed to have eleven (11) players on defense.

5.17. **Extra Players in Batting Lineup**

5.17.1. Teams have unlimited batters, but cannot drop below the number on the starting batting order except as noted at 5.17.2. & 5.17.3. below. All players must be listed on the lineup sheet before the game begins.

5.17.2. Should an offensive player become injured, causing the team to drop below the original batting lineup, the team will not be forced to forfeit the game, and an out will be declared only the first time that position comes to bat.

5.17.3. If a player is ejected, an out will be recorded each time his position comes up to bat.

6. HOME RUN RULES

6.1. Major Plus=DHH+10 HR's, Major=DHH+8 HR's, AAA=DHH+6 HR's, AA=DHH+2 HR's

6.2. Homeruns over the limit are an out.

6.3. If divisions are combined, the HR rule will be adjusted to a mid-point of current HR total for each division. (example: Major DHH+8 HR's, AAA DHH+6 HR's, so mid-point HR is DHH+7 HR's for a Major/AAA combined event.)

7. DESIGNATED HOME RUN HITTER RULE

7.1. A team has the right to designate a batter in the lineup that can hit as many home runs as they can without any of his home runs counting towards the team limit allowed. If the HR batter is walked intentionally or unintentionally, the next batter that hits a home run will not count against the team's total until the HR batter comes up to bat again.

7.2. If a DHH is substituted or removed from the game for any reason, the team loses the DHH. The DHH spot will be reinstated for the game if the DHH returns to the lineup.

8. EQUALIZER RULES

8.1. When a lower-class or older age group team is playing a higher-class or younger age group team, lower or older team will have one out of two options:
  8.1.1. OPTION 1 - Five (5) runs per game (Awarded one (1) run an inning for the first 5 innings)
  8.1.2. OPTION 2 - 11th defensive player
  8.1.3. There is no automatic Home team for teams giving up an equalizer. When teams are equalized after granting an equalizer, a double coin-toss will determine Home team advantage with the exception of the Championship game (see rule 5.3.5.).
  8.1.4. When there is a 2 (or more) classification or age group difference in the opposing teams, the tournament director reserves the right to implement both Option 1 and Option 2 to make the game competitive.

8.2. Director reserves the right to not grant an equalizer when older age group team is classified higher than the younger lower classified team.

8.3. Points Awarded - All lower-class teams playing up in class, will be placed in the order they finish with all similar class teams in the event. (example: The highest finishing team in each class will receive first (1st) place points for the event regardless of their actual finish.)

9. TEAM CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

9.1. Most players have at one point participated in USSSA during their softball playing history. We have a database of players and their playing history, so we will leverage the information to assist us with classifying teams appropriately following our guidelines below.

9.2. Even though teams are allowed to register a team at their desired team classification, the team classification is not official until all players are entered to the online roster, ONLINE ROSTER is reviewed by a director and team is approved at their registered classification prior to an event. It's the manager's responsibility to confirm your director has approved your ONLINE ROSTER at the current classification prior to an event.

9.3. Players with no player history will be added to our database. A picture of the player ID, cell number, and email address is required for new adds to our database.

9.4. **FIRST STEP…**Directors will reference the division teams are currently participating in other organizations to serve as reference to help establish a baseline team classification.

9.5. **SECOND STEP…**If the team is new with absolutely no team and player playing history, we will consider starting the team at a AAA classification unless a team requests starting at a higher division.

9.6. **Players with a USSSA Slow Pitch PRV of Major, AA, and A will be classified a Senior Major Plus player.**
  9.6.1. Major Plus – no player rating limitations.
  9.6.2. Major – a maximum of three Senior Major Plus players allowed.

9.6.3. AAA – a maximum of three Senior Major players allowed. No players with a **PRV of B of higher allowed** on the roster.

9.6.4. AA – a maximum of three Senior AAA players allowed. No players with a **PRV of C of higher allowed** on the roster.

9.6.5. **Directors reserve the right to adjust a team's classification based on skillset, performance, and playing history information at any point of the season with the approval of the USSSA Senior Softball National Committee. Roster exceptions must be approved by the committee.**

9.7. Managers can request a team reclassification after four events. Team requesting a division drop must show sub .500 winning %, sub 1000 power rating, and -5 average run differential in the current team class.

10. ROSTER GUIDELINES

10.1. The age a player attains on his birthday in any particular year is considered to be his age for that entire calendar year.

10.2. A player must meet the minimum age of the group in which he competes, but may play in any younger age group(s).

10.3. All players participating in an event must be listed as ELIGIBLE on the team's online roster. A penalty can be imposed for not complying by the event director.

10.4. Teams with less than 10 players listed online (ELIGIBLE & PENDING combined count) prior to the event game schedule being released will be either removed or placed in the highest division for the event.

10.5. The player and team manager are responsible to ensure that a player's name does not appear on more than one qualifying tournament team roster per age group. Maximum two age groups.

10.6. Players participating in two age groups in the same event can only participate in the same division AND both age groups CANNOT be combined in the same pool or bracket. (example: 55 Major and 50 Major is approved. 55 Major Plus and 50 Major is not approved. 55 Major and 50 Major in the same combined pool or bracket is not approved.)

10.7. There are no Bordering or Out of State player restrictions.

10.8. Teams are restricted to THREE drop down players with an established USSSA Senior Softball playing history participating on teams one level higher (See Rule 9.6). Once a player participates/fills-in on a higher rated roster FOUR or more times in USSSA or GSL, they will be considered an established player at that higher level. Players may not participate on any team two levels below their established Senior classification. State Directors are allowed to make roster exceptions with approval from the **USSSA Senior Softball National Committee.**

10.9. After the USSSA Senior World Series, a team may use players that qualify for an age group the next calendar year.