

## **FOREWORD**

Playing rules not specifically covered herein, shall be governed by The Official MLB Rules of Baseball – National League.

### **RULE 1.00 – NAME & OBJECTIVE**

#### **1.01**

This organization shall be known as USSSA Rec Baseball.

#### **1.02**

The objective of USSSA Rec Baseball shall be to organize and promote youth and adult baseball, to perpetuate the interest and love of the game. To coordinate the providing of an opportunity for teams to compete in league and tournament competition that leads to state championships and world championships in their respective competitive classifications and age divisions.

### **RULE 2.00 – MEMBERSHIP & PARTICIPATION**

#### **2.01**

*Team Membership:* A team registration fee shall be paid seasonally to participate in the USSSA Baseball program. The USSSA Baseball season begins August 1st and concludes July 31st.

#### **2.02**

*Umpire Membership:* An Umpire registration fee shall be paid yearly to officiate in the USSSA Baseball program. Included with membership is general liability and accidental medical insurance while officiating in the USSSA Baseball program. In addition, Umpires may choose to purchase optional insurance that shall cover the Umpire during non-USSSA Baseball contests.

#### **2.03**

*League Participation:* In all USSSA Baseball sanctioned leagues, teams shall qualify for State Championships and / or World Series play.

#### **2.04**

*Tournament Participation:* In all USSSA Baseball sanctioned tournaments, teams shall qualify for State Championships and / or World Series play.

## ***RULE 3.00 – INDIVIDUAL PLAYER & TEAM ELIGIBILITY***

### **3.01**

Age determinations are made as follows:

#### **5U Division**

Players who turn 6 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible.

#### **6U Division**

Players who turn 7 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible.

#### **7U Division**

Players who turn 8 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible.

#### **8U Division**

Players who turn 9 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible.

#### **9U Division**

Players who turn 10 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible.

#### **10U Division**

Players who turn 11 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible.

#### **11U Division**

Players who turn 12 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible.

#### **12U Division**

Players who turn 13 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible.

#### **14U Division**

Players who turn 15 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible.

#### **3.01.A**

All players participating in USSSA Rec League Baseball play shall have photocopies of their original birth certificate in the possession of their team manager at all times. Upon protest, failure to have a photocopy of the original birth certificate immediately available upon demand shall result in the offending team losing the game(s).

### **3.02**

A player that is found to be illegal due to an age violation during or after a league or tournament game, shall result in the offending team losing the game(s), team and player being ejected from the tournament, team being placed last in the standings and forfeiting all awards, points, sponsors travel money, and berths that would have been or have been awarded. The illegal player shall be removed from the offending team's Official Online Roster and additional penalties may be applied to the illegal player and / or team manager / coaches.

### **3.03**

A player who is in violation of the USSSA Constitution or the Official Baseball National By-laws & Rules shall be an illegal player.

#### **3.03.A**

A team with a player found to be illegal due to age, grade or class violation, anytime during the USSSA event, will be deemed ineligible. The team WILL be disqualified and put in last place. The manger could face suspension.

#### **3.03.B**

Any team in violation of any roster rules located in section 3.08, 3.09 and 3.10 MAY be disqualified from their current event and be placed in last place. The manager could face suspension.

#### **3.03.C**

A player found to be playing on multiple teams in the same weekend, anytime during the USSSA event, both teams MAY be disqualified and put in last place. The player, parents and managers could face suspension.

### **3.03.D**

An ineligible player is any player not listed on the official online roster (when rosters are required), a player with an incorrect birthday, or a player with name listed incorrectly on the official online roster. All players must be listed on a team's online roster correctly prior to their first game or prior to the event's deadline to add players. Penalty: Any ineligible player MAY cause the team to be disqualified and put in last place. Each case will be looked at by the teams State Director to determine if the player is ineligible.

### **3.03.E**

For any player to be eligible, they must be listed on the ELIGIBLE PLAYERS list on their teams online Roster. This is done by approving the online RETURN TO PLAY WAIVER and approving the player for the team.

## **3.04**

Player Roster Eligibility:

### **3.04.A**

Players shall only appear on one (1) Official Online League Roster.

### **3.04.B**

Players shall only physically play for one (1) team per day, event, tournament, or weekend, regardless of location, venue, age division and / or classification.

## **3.05**

Team Eligibility:

### **3.05.A**

No team shall be allowed to compete in any USSSA Rec League Baseball program without first paying their team registration fee.

## ***RULE 4.00 – QUALIFYING TOURNAMENTS***

### **4.01**

State Directors shall have the authority to amend these National By-laws & Rules to accommodate the needs of the Qualifying Tournament with the approval of the Baseball Committee Chairman. The State Director or directors appointed by the State Director shall conduct all Qualifying Tournaments to assure that the USSSA Baseball National By-laws & Rules are being followed at all times.

### **4.02**

Amounts to be charged as entry fees for Qualifying Tournaments shall be at the discretion of the State Director. The quantity of awards to be presented for Qualifying Tournaments shall be at the discretion of the State Director. Each State Director shall adopt an acceptable system to qualifying teams for State Championship and / or World Series participation.

### **4.03**

Pool Play / Tie Breaker Criteria: Once advanced to subsequent tie breaker criteria, do not return to a previous criteria.

These Tie Breakers will be for all events: Qualifying, State and World Series.

- 1) Winning Percentage – Descending
- 2) Number Wins – Descending
- 3) Number Loses – Ascending
- 4) Tied Teams (vs. each other) Winning Pct. – Descending (more than 2 teams tied, skip this tie breaker)
- 5) Avg. Runs Allowed – Ascending
- 6) Avg. Run Differential with a maximum of (8) – Descending

## **RULE 7.00 – RULES OF PLAY**

### **7.01**

Playing Field, Equipment & Safety:

#### **7.01.A**

The playing field shall be laid out according to the recommended dimensions contained within these rules. (Chart 7.01.A-1)

**CHART 7.01.A-1**

| DIVISION OF PLAY | BASE PATHS | PITCHING DISTANCE |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 5U               | 60'        | >25'              |
| 6U               | 60'        | >25'              |
| 7U               | 60'        | >32'              |
| 8U               | 60'        | >32'              |
| 9U               | 60' or 65' | 46'               |
| 10U              | 60' or 65' | 46'               |
| 11U              | 70'        | 50'               |
| 12U              | 70'        | 50'               |
| 14U (60/90)      | 90'        | 60' 6"            |

#### **7.01.B**

For details on field layout including recommended direction of play, fair and foul territory requirements, infield and outfield grades, pitcher's mound height and slope, batter's and catcher's box dimensions, and base and home plate size and construction should be referred to the Official Rules of Baseball as published by Major League Baseball on MLB.com.

#### **7.01.C**

All bats for age divisions 14U and younger must be permanently stamped with the new USSSA 1.15 BPF Mark (Chart 7.01.C), or BBCOR.50 Certified Mark or made of wood and manufactured by a licensed USSSA manufacturer.

##### **7.01.C.1**

Effective January 1st, 2020, all 13U players must use a maximum drop 8 (-8) bat with the official USSSA 1.15 BPF Mark permanently stamped.

##### **7.01.C.2**

All 14u players must use a maximum drop 5 (-5) bat with the official USSSA 1.15 BPF Mark permanently stamped.

##### **7.01.C.3**

All bats for scholastic divisions (High School Events) must conform to the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) bat standards including a length to weight ratio no greater than negative three (-3) ounces. These bats must be permanently stamped with the BBCOR.50 Certified Mark or made of wood and manufactured by a licensed USSSA manufacturer.

*Rule 7.01.C Penalty: (First Offense) – If the Umpire discovers that a bat does not conform to USSSA Rule 7.01.C until a time during or after which the bat has been used in play, it shall not be grounds for declaring the batter out and/or ejection from the game. If the Umpire discovers that a bat has been used to put a ball in play and before the next legal pitch, the defensive team shall have the choice of the result of play or the batter being*

called out and all runners returning to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. (Second Offense)—If a team is found in violation of this rule a second time, then the manager shall be ejected in addition to the First Offense penalty.

#### **7.01.D**

Any bat permanently stamped with the official USA Baseball logo is legal to use in any USSSA baseball event, except where BBCOR is required. In all 14U Events all Players and all Teams must use a max drop 5 (-5) bat.

#### **7.01.E**

Protests on uniforms shall not be allowed. It shall be the League / Tournament Director's responsibility regarding uniform legality. Violation of the uniform rules shall result in the violator being allowed to immediately conform or be removed from the game. Managers and coaches may wear athletic type gear.

#### **7.01.F**

In age divisions 5U – 12U, non-metal cleats shall be worn. In age divisions 13U and older, traditional metal baseball spikes shall be permitted.

#### **7.01.G**

The catcher shall wear all appropriate protective gear including a catcher's helmet with facemask and either a built in extended throat guard or a separately attached throat guard, chest protector, shin and / or leg guards, and protective cup.

*Rule 7.01.G Comment:* In age divisions 4U – 12U, the catcher's helmet shall fully cover both ears.

#### **7.01.H**

All offensive players shall use a double ear-flap batting helmet whenever at bat, on deck, on base or any other time outside of the dugout and the ball is live and in play.

#### **7.01.I**

*Special Protective Gear:* USSSA continues its long-standing policy of permitting players to determine the use of the protective equipment when they deem it appropriate.

#### **7.01.J**

Bat / ball boys / girls under the age of eighteen (18) shall not be permitted.

#### **7.01.K**

All Playing equipment shall not contain undue commercialization of the product.

#### **7.01.L**

*The Ball.* USSSA licensed baseballs must have a USSSA Mark, must weigh between 5 and 5.25 ounces, must have a circumference of between 8.95 and 9.25 inches, have a COR of between .5 and .555 and have an ASTM standard compression of between 200 and 350 pounds. Molded balls without a traditional cover will be allowed in USSSA play but will require at least 6 weeks of field testing by USSSA and written approval of USSSA in advance of applying the USSSA Mark to such balls, which written approval may add additional performance/design requirements not otherwise applicable to other USSSA licensed balls.

### **7.02**

#### Game Preliminaries

##### **7.02.A**

A flip of a coin between the two teams shall determine the home team for each pool play game. The highest seeded team shall be the home team for bracket play games in single elimination brackets. In double elimination brackets, the highest seeded team shall be the home team until the championship game. In the championship game, the team in the winner's bracket shall be the home team and a coin toss shall determine the home team for the "IF" game.

##### **7.02.B**

In League, Qualifying Tournament and State Championship play, time limits may be used with approval of the League / Tournament / State Director.

### **7.02.C**

In World Series play, time limits may be used in pool play and consolation bracket games with approval of the Baseball Committee Chairman.

### **7.02.D**

Approved Team Line-ups:

**7.02.D.1** Teams may bat a nine (9) player line-up, or a nine (9) player line-up with a Designated Hitter (DH), or a ten (10) player line-up with an Extra Hitter (EH), or a 10 player line-up up with a DH and EH, or a continuous line-up of all present, eligible, uniformed players. Such line-up must be declared before the start of the game and used the entire game. A Designated Hitter (DH) can be used for ages 9u thru14u.

#### **7.02.D.1(a)**

If a team uses a line-up that contains substitute players, all starting players may be removed and re-enter the game once but must re-enter in their original position in the batting order. Non-starters are not allowed to re-enter. When a starter re-enters, the player in the starter's batting position in the batting order must be removed from the game and is ineligible for the remainder of the game.

#### **7.02.D.1(b)**

If a team uses a line-up that contains ten (10) players, the player in the Extra Hitter position has free defensive substitution.

#### **7.02.D.1(c)**

If a team uses a continuous line-up, all players other than the nine (9) defensive position players are Extra Hitters and may move freely in defensive positions with the exception of the pitching position. Any player(s) arriving after the game has begun, shall be added to the bottom of the batting line-up. When using the continuous lineup and a player has to leave the game for any reason, that position in the line-up becomes an out when that at bat comes around.

### **7.02.E**

Designated Hitter playing rules:

#### **7.02.E.1**

The DH can bat for any defensive player (not just the pitcher, as in some leagues).

#### **7.02.E.2**

The DH would normally bat for one player and any of that player's substitutes on defense for the original player.

#### **7.02.E.3**

The DH must be listed next to or under the player he is batting for in lineup.

#### **7.02.E.4**

The DH and the player he is batting for are both locked into the same batting slot; neither of these two players can ever bat in another batting position.

#### **7.02.E.5**

If the DH enters the game on defense, the player he was batting for must come out of the game.

#### **7.02.E.6**

A replaced DH can re-enter the game one time since he was considered a starter. The defensive player being hit for can also re-enter the game one time if subbed for. Both must always stay in the same batting spot.

### **7.02.E.7**

The DH role for a team is terminated for the rest of the game if:

#### **7.02.E.7(a)**

A replaced DH re-enters the game on defense (the acting DH is disqualified from further participation.)

#### **7.02.E.7(b)**

The player for whom the DH was batting pinch hits or pinch runs for the DH.

#### **7.02.E.7(c)**

The DH assumes a defensive position.

### **7.02.F**

Teams may play an official game with an eight (8) player line-up. If a team plays with an eight (8) player line-up, an out shall be declared for the ninth (9th) position in the batting line-up each turn at bat. A ninth (9th) player and all subsequent players may be added to the bottom of the batting line-up as soon as they become available.

### **7.02.G**

A team may continue a game with a minimum of eight (8) players.

## **7.03**

### **Starting and Ending a Game**

#### **7.03.A**

A regulation game consists of six (6) innings for age divisions 4U – 12U and seven (7) innings for age divisions 13U and older, unless the game is:

##### **7.03.A.1**

Extended because the score is tied after the completion of the regulation number of innings, in which case, play shall continue until the visiting team has scored more total runs than the home team at the end of a completed inning, or the home team scores the winning run in an uncompleted inning.

##### **7.03.A.2**

Shortened because the home team needs none of its half of the last inning or only a fraction of it to win.

##### **7.03.A.3**

Shortened because an imposed Time Limit expires; or

##### **7.03.A.4**

Shortened because any applicable part of USSSA Rule 7.03.B has been met.

##### **7.03.A.5**

Shortened because any applicable part of USSSA Rule 7.03.C has been met.

##### **7.03.A.6**

Pool play games can end in a tie if the time limit is up or a complete game has been played.

#### **7.03.B (Chart 7.03.B-1)**

An imposed Mercy (run) Rule shall be used to complete a regulation game when one team's margin of lead is greater than or equal to the listed run differential in the corresponding listed start inning. In enforcing this rule, the home team shall not bat if they are winning and the mercy requirement is met prior to the start of the bottom half of the listed inning. Similarly, if the home team is batting and meets the mercy requirement in the bottom half of a listed inning the home team shall cease batting and the game shall end.

**Chart 7.03.B-1**

| LENGTH OF GAME | RUN DIFFERENTIAL | START INNING |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| 6 Innings      | 15               | 3rd Inning   |
| 6 Innings      | 8                | 4th Inning   |
| 7 Innings      | 15               | 3rd Inning   |
| 7 Innings      | 12               | 4th Inning   |
| 7 Innings      | 8                | 5th Inning   |

**7.03.C**

If a game is called due to rain, weather, light failure or other acts of nature and cannot be resumed it is a regulation game if:

**7.03.C.1**

For a six (6) inning game, if three (3) innings have been played or if the home team has scored more runs after two and one half (2 1/2) innings the game shall be declared a complete game.

**7.04**

The Batter, Batter Runner & Runner:

**7.04.A**

An Intentional Walk may be issued upon announcement from either the pitcher or catcher without throwing pitches.

**7.04.B**

At any time, the offensive team may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and catcher of record from the previous inning on defense. The courtesy runner must be a player not presently in the line-up. If no players not presently in the line-up are available, the courtesy runner shall be the player making the last batted out. The re-entry status of the courtesy runner, pitcher, and catcher shall not be affected by this rule. If at any time, a courtesy runner is determined to be ineligible, a proper replacement pursuant to these rules (if available) shall be used without penalty.

**7.04.C**

Whenever a tag play is evident, a runner must slide or seek to avoid contact with the fielder and / or catcher. Malicious contact shall supersede all obstruction penalties. Malicious contact is solely up to the discretion of the Umpire.

*Rule 7.04.C Penalty:* The runner shall be called out and may be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Umpires.

**7.04.D**

A runner who jumps over a player will be called out whether or not contact is made with the defensive player.

**7.05**

The Pitcher:

**7.05.A** A player removed from the pitching position (starting pitcher or subsequent relief pitcher) may not return to the pitching position for the remainder of the game. The defensive team may correct this rules infraction at any time by substituting a legal pitcher without penalty. If an illegal pitcher is permitted to pitch, any pitch or play that results is legal. The rule violation should be caught by the Umpire or the offensive team and immediately corrected. If the violating pitcher has legal innings remaining, the violation is deemed an improper substitution and is corrected without penalty. If the violating pitcher has no legal innings remaining, it's deemed a pitching limitations violation pursuant to

USSSA Rule 7.05.B.7.

**7.05.B**

(Chart 7.05.B-1) The end of the day for the purpose of this rule shall be the time of day or night when the ballpark is shut down and the teams go home for the night break. Games that for any reason extend past midnight (12:00 AM) or start late at night, past midnight (12:00 AM) and are completed before the teams take the night break, shall count as being played on the scheduled day. A game not completed before the night break pursuant to USSSA Rules 7.03.D shall be a suspended game. Suspended games, when resumed (the next day or another day), shall count as being played on two different days. The outs recorded during the portion of the game played prior to suspension shall count as being played on the regularly scheduled day and the outs recorded during the portion of the game played once resumed, shall count as being played on the resumed day.

**Chart 7.05.B-1**

| AGE DIVISION   | ONE DAY MAXIMUM TO PITCH THE NEXT DAY | ONE DAY MAXIMUM | THREE DAY MAXIMUM |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 7U – 12U       | 3                                     | 6               | 8                 |
| Scholastic 14U | 3                                     | 7               | 8                 |

**7.05.B.1**

ONE DAY MAXIMUM TO PITCH THE NEXT DAY: The maximum number of innings a player can legally pitch in one (1) day and still pitch the next day.

*Rule 7.05.B.1 Example:* In the 7U – 14U age divisions, a player may legally pitch a maximum of three (3) innings in one (1) day and still legally pitch the next day. If the player pitches three and one-third (3 1/3) or more innings in one (1) day, the player cannot legally pitch the next day.

**7.05.B.2**

ONE DAY MAXIMUM: The maximum number of innings a player can legally pitch in one (1) day.

*Rule 7.05.B.2 Example:* In the 7U – 12U age divisions, a player may legally pitch a maximum of six (6) innings in one (1) day. The player would be ineligible to pitch the next day. Similarly, in the 13U – 14U age divisions, a player may legally pitch a maximum of seven (7) innings in one (1) day. The player would be ineligible to legally pitch the next day.

**7.05.B.3**

THREE DAY MAXIMUM: The maximum number of innings a player can legally pitch in three (3) consecutive days.

*Rule 7.05.B.3 Example:* In the 7U – 14U age divisions, a player may legally pitch a maximum of eight (8) innings in three (3) consecutive days. This is to be interpreted as a player may legally pitch any combination of innings to equal eight (8) innings in two (2) days as long as the player doesn't pitch more than three (3) innings the first (1st) day. Similarly, as a player may legally pitch any combination of innings to equal eight (8) innings in three (3) days as long as the player doesn't pitch more than three (3) innings the first (1st) or second (2nd) days.

**7.05.B.4**

MANDATORY DAYS OF REST:

**7.05.B.4(a)**

A player that pitches more than three (3) innings in one day MUST rest the next day.

**7.05.B.4(b)**

A player that pitches eight (8) innings in two (2) consecutive days MUST rest the next day.

**7.05.B.4(c)**

A player that pitches three (3) consecutive days (regardless of total quantity of innings pitched) MUST rest the next day.

**7.05.B.5**

For all cumulative totals in this rule, one (1) out equals one-third (1/3) of an inning, two (2) outs equals two thirds (2/3) of an inning and three (3) outs equals one (1) full inning. A pitcher that pitches in a game and records no outs is not charged with any innings pitched.

**7.05.B.6**

Outs recorded during a game that ends in forfeit shall count towards a pitchers' innings limits.

**7.05.B.7**

For purposes of pitching limitations rules, a pitcher is in violation of the rule if he records any out above the legal pitching limits pursuant to these rules.

*Rule 7.05.C.7 Exception:* Exceeding the maximum innings allowed in the case of a double or triple play shall not be counted against the pitcher for the purpose of this rule but shall be counted towards the pitcher's limits with regards to the eligibility to pitch the next day, etc.

**7.05.B.8**

It shall be the responsibility of each team to challenge pitching violations by notifying the Umpire and then filing a Protest with the League / Tournament Director. A protest may be filed at any point after the pitcher in violation records any out beyond his legal limit AND while the pitcher in violation is in the game as the pitcher of record. If such violation is the last recorded out of the game, the protest MUST be filed prior to the Umpires and the protesting team leaving the field of play.

*Rule 7.05.B.1 – 7.05.B.7 Penalty:* Any violation shall result in immediate forfeiture of the game. If such violation occurs during Pool Play, the team in violation of the rule may not advance to the Championship bracket regardless of record.

**7.05.C**

Pitching mound visits will remain 2 coaches visits per inning, with the second coaches visit to the same pitcher in the same inning resulting in a pitching change.

**7.05.D**

A Pitcher shall pitch to one batter, until the batter is put out, or reaches 1st base, or the inning is over. A pitcher that starts an inning must pitch to the first batter until the batter is put out or reaches 1st base. USSSA will NOT be using the MLB mandatory batter limits.

## **RULE 8.00 – COACH PITCH SPECIFIC RULES**

### **8.01**

*Fair Ball Arc:* There shall be a twenty (20) foot arc drawn from first (1st) baseline to third (3rd) baseline in front of home plate. A batted ball must go past this line to be a fair ball.

### **8.02**

*Pitching Circle:* There shall be a ten (10) foot diameter circle with the front edge at forty-two (42) feet from the rear point of home plate.

### **8.03**

There shall be a chalked or permanent pitching rubber 32' from the rear point of home plate for 7U/8U and 25' from the rear point of home plate for 5U/6U.

#### **8.03.A**

The pitching coach must be in contact with the chalked/permanent pitcher's rubber while pitching. The coach may choose to pitch from behind the chalked/permanent pitcher's rubber and is not required to be in contact.

#### **8.03.B**

The pitching coach shall not verbally or physically coach while in the pitching position.

#### **8.03.C**

The pitching coach shall position himself as not to be an obstruction to the defensive team on any possible play once the ball has been hit.

*Rule 8.03.C Additional Penalty:* If a coach violates this rule before the ball is pitched, First Offense: Warning; Second Offense: Removal of coach as the pitcher for the remainder of the game.

### **8.04**

*Pitching Coach:* The Pitching Coach shall be an adult at least eighteen (18) years of age.

### **8.05**

The catcher shall receive the pitch in the catcher's box in a normal baseball manner. If in the Umpire's judgment, the catcher is not receiving the ball in a normal baseball manner, there shall be a warning issued. If the act continues after the warning, the offending teams' manager shall be ejected.

### **8.06**

Ten (10) defensive players shall play in the field with four (4) outfielders. No outfielder shall assume an infield position.

### **8.08**

The defensive player listed as pitcher shall not leave the pitching circle until the ball is hit.

*Rule 8.08 Penalty:* The play continues. After the play has ended, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or no-pitch.

*Rule 8.08 Additional Penalty:* First Offense: Warning; Second Offense: Removal of player from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

### **8.09**

Defensive coaches shall not be allowed on the field of play and shall coach from the dugout.

### **8.10**

The Infield Fly Rule shall not be in effect at any time.

### **8.11**

The batting order shall constitute all present players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.

#### **8.11.A**

Teams may start a game with eight (8) players. The ninth (9th) & tenth (10th) positions in the batting order shall be declared an out each turn at bat.

*Rule 8.11.A Approved Ruling:* A ninth (9th) & tenth (10th) player and all subsequent players may be added to the bottom of the batting line-up as soon as they become available.

#### **8.12**

Teams may use free substitution on defense, but the batting order shall remain the same.

#### **8.13**

Bunting shall not be allowed.

#### **8.14**

The batter shall receive a maximum of six (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes. If the last pitch is fouled, the batter gets an additional pitch. An at bat cannot end on a foul ball.

#### **8.15**

A player may NOT be Intentionally Walked.

#### **8.16**

Runners shall not lead-off or steal bases. A runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit or reaches home plate.

#### **8.17**

A courtesy runner for catcher of record only the previous inning may be used. The courtesy runner shall be the player that made the previous out. If no outs have been recorded in the game, the courtesy runner shall be the previous batter not on base. If the team batting has not played defense yet and a courtesy runner is used for a player, the player that was run for must assume the catching position the next inning. This scenario only applies in the first inning for the visiting team.

#### **8.18**

A team may score a maximum of seven (7) runs per inning.

#### **8.19**

The game is over, when the opposing team is mathematically eliminated from scoring enough runs to win or tie the game. (Run Rules still apply)

#### **8.20**

Umpires shall call "Time" after every play and declare the ball dead. "Time" shall be called as soon as all runners are not attempting to advance. "Time" does not have to be called by the defense for the purpose of this rule.

*Rule 8.20 Comment:* When a runner stands off a base and "jukes" or "feints" back and forth, this is to be interpreted as "not attempting to advance" and "Time" shall be called.

#### **8.21**

When a batted ball hits the Pitching Coach, the following shall apply:

##### **8.21.A**

If in the Umpire's judgment, the coach did not make a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, the batter is declared out and no runners shall advance.

##### **8.21.B**

If in the Umpire's judgment, the coach did make a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, the ball becomes dead and a no-pitch is declared.

## ***RULE 12.00 – ALL-STAR PROGRAM***

### **12.01**

Leagues that conform to the below guidelines and register one hundred percent (100%) of their league teams shall be allowed to participate. Sanctioned leagues may be located anywhere within the state of Alabama or within 30 miles of the state line in any direction. State Directors may sanction others with the approval of the Baseball Committee Chairman.

#### **12.01.A**

Leagues shall submit their complete rules, by-laws, and schedules for approval.

#### **12.01.B**

A league shall consist of a minimum eight (8) game schedule.

#### **12.01.C**

Eligible players shall compete in a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of the scheduled league games.

#### **12.01.D**

State Directors shall set guidelines for teams to qualify for the League State Championship and World Series.

### **12.02**

All-Star Program: All-Star is a playing level for actual All-Star teams formed from USSSA Sanctioned Leagues. Players shall be permitted to participate with an All-Star team and an A, AA, AAA or Major tournament team.

#### **12.02.A**

Leagues shall conform to all the requirements pursuant to USSSA Rules 12.01.A.1 – 12.01. A.3.

##### **12.02.A.1**

All-Star teams may be chosen by any method.

##### **12.02.A.2**

Leagues may have multiple All-Star teams in any age division.

##### **12.02.A.3**

The League President (or Highest Officer) shall submit an official roster to the State Director for approval.

##### **12.02.A.4**

Only State Directors shall register and approve all Official Online Roster for All-Star teams.

#### **12.02.B**

State Directors shall set guidelines for teams to qualify for the All-Star State Championship and World Series.

## **RULE 13.00 – SAFETY RULES**

### **13.01**

#### **FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL CONCUSSION LAWS:**

USSSA, as a sanctioning body of athletic events, shares the concerns being raised on a national and local level regarding concussions and concussion symptoms in participants, coaches/managers and umpires/referees in USSSA sanctioned activities. USSSA encourages its directors, umpires, coaches, referees, teams, team managers, and all adults involved in youth activities and participants to learn all they can about concussions in athletics and requires each of them and each of the USSSA directors to follow all federal, state and local laws (including concussion training and reaction laws) with regard to athletic competition sanctioned by USSSA. In addition, USSSA has added the following to the rule books of each USSSA sport which does not defer to another organization for its rule book.

Upon becoming aware that a participant or coach/manager of his team has received a suspected concussion (or has been struck in the head area with any significant force), the Team Manager will not allow that person to participate in any USSSA sanctioned event and if occurring during a USSSA sanctioned event, shall have that person removed from the playing field of any USSSA sanctioned event.

Upon becoming aware that a participant, coach/manager or official/umpire/referee has received a suspected concussion (or has been struck in the head area with any significant force), a USSSA official/umpire/referee or director will have that person removed from the playing field of any USSSA sanctioned event. Without a written medical clearance from a licensed medical doctor to return to play, such persons will not be allowed to return to the USSSA playing field in a USSSA sanctioned event. For officials/umpires/referees, the medical written consent form must be presented to the Tournament Director and retained permanently by the USSSA State Director.

For participants and coaches/managers, the medical written consent form must be presented to the Team Manager and retained permanently by the Team Manager. Any Team Manager, who allows a coach/manager or participant back on a USSSA sanctioned event playing field without first obtaining the required written consent, may be suspended by the State Director for up to one year and upon request of the State Director, may be suspended for a longer duration by the USSSA disbarment committee. State Directors allowing an official/umpire/referee back in the field of play without the necessary consent will be subject to being disciplined as determined by the USSSA Board of Directors.

In the event of severe head trauma in a USSSA sanctioned activity, the injured person will not be moved, and an ambulance will be called, unless otherwise directed by a qualified medical professional. The parent or guardian of the injured person, however, will not be bound by this protocol and may choose a different approach consistent with their legal rights as the parent or guardian.

### **13.02**

#### **ALTERED BATS:**

##### **13.02.C.1**

Altered Bat Director Inspection and Suspension: A USSSA Director may at any time ask to inspect a bat that has been brought into the location of a USSSA sanctioned event or any other USSSA facility. The owner and / or user may either:

##### **13.02.C.1(a)**

Withhold the bat from inspection and accept an immediate two-year (automatic life time for second time offenders pursuant to USSSA Rule 13.02.C.1 and / or 13.02.C.2) suspension from USSSA sanctioned activities with no right to appeal; or,

13.02.C.1(b)

Allow the Director to inspect the bat and reach a conclusion as to whether or not the bat might be altered.

### **13.02.C.2**

Altered Bat Determination by Altered Bat Committee Chairman or Manufacturer:

If, after making the inspection of a potential altered bat, the Director in his discretion decides that the bat might be an altered bat, the suspected offending owner and / or user and may either:

#### **13.02.C.2(a)**

Withhold the bat from further examination by the USSSA Altered Bat Committee Chairman or Manufacturer and accept an immediate two-year (up to life time for second time offenders pursuant to USSSA Rules 13.02.C.1 and / or 13.02.C.2) suspension from USSSA sanctioned activities with no right to appeal; or

#### **13.02.C.2(b)**

Allow the Director to send the bat to the USSSA Altered Bat Committee Chairman and / or Manufacturer for a determination as to whether or not the bat is altered. If the Manufacturer or the USSSA Altered Bat Committee

Chairman determines that the bat has been altered, the Altered Bat Committee Chairman in consultation with the Director who inspected the bat at the USSSA facility may suspend a first-time offender for up to five (5) years from USSSA play. For a second-time offender pursuant to USSSA Rules 13.02.C.1 and / or 13.02.C.2, any such suspension shall be lifetime.

### **13.02.C.3**

Ownership and Knowledge of Bat Being Altered:

The responsibility for knowing whether a bat is altered is that of the users and the owner of the bat. If an individual uses an altered bat in USSSA sanctioned play or is the owner of an altered bat that is brought into a USSSA facility, the suspensions pursuant to USSSA Rules 13.02.C.1 and / or 13.02.C.2 shall be imposed without regard to what the individual actually knew about the altered bat. An individual must know that his bat is

not an altered bat, if he brings it into a USSSA facility or used it in a USSSA sanctioned activity. If not, the individual can be suspended from USSSA activities for using or owning an altered bat. The fact that the individual did not know that the bat was altered is not a factor in imposing the suspension. The only question is whether the bat is altered or whether the owner / user has refused to let the bat be examined to determine if it is altered. After the Director, Altered Bat Committee and Manufacturer examination of a bat to determine if it is altered have all been completed, or upon the decision of the owner / user to not allow further inspection of the bat pursuant to USSSA Rules 13.02.C.1 and / or 13.02.C.2, the bat shall be returned to the owner. If no one claims to be the owner, USSSA shall retain the bat. Once the bat has been returned to the owner, no appeal can be made with respect to whether the bat is altered or not.

### **13.02.C.4**

Investigation Cooperation: Any coach, manager, player or other person who fails to cooperate in the investigation by USSSA of a potential or actual altered bat may be subject to an unsportsmanlike conduct suspension. A manager or coach of a team that has more than one of his team's bats determined to be altered (or not allowed to be inspected upon request for an altered bat inspection pursuant to USSSA Rules 13.02.C.1 and / or 13.02.C.2, may be subject to an unsportsmanlike conduct suspension.

### **13.02.C.5**

Awards and Coach Suspensions: If an owner / user chooses to submit a suspected altered bat to the USSSA Altered Bat Committee or Manufacturer no awards may be given to the team until the bat is determined not to be altered. If the bat is found to be altered, no awards or berth shall be given, and the team shall be placed last in the standings and the listed manager and coaches may be suspended for unsportsmanlike conduct.

### **13.02.C.6**

Participation in, Profits from, or Encouraging the Altering of USSSA Marked Bats: Anyone who participates in, profits from, or encourages the altering of USSSA marked bats shall be suspended indefinitely from all USSSA activities, until the offending party has satisfied all requests of the USSSA Altered Bat Committee with respect to his altered bat activities including but not limited to publicly swearing under penalties of perjury to never again participate in, profit from, or encourage the altering of USSSA marked bats. Violation of such an oath shall result in permanent suspension from all USSSA activities.

### **13.02.C.7**

Compression Testing: Failure of a USSSA approved compression testing device test shall result in the offending bat being removed from play for the duration of the tournament or league game but no longer without the permission of the owner / user – such as in the case of an allowed USSSA altered bat determination pursuant to USSSA Rule 13.02.C.1 and / or 13.02.C.2. Multiple failures of such USSSA compression testing may in the discretion of USSSA be viewed as unsportsmanlike conduct of the owner/user, coaches, manager and team.

### **13.02.C.8**

Custom Bats: No approved manufacturer may make a custom USSSA bat for a player or a team. All USSSA marked bats made by a USSSA approved manufacturer must be available to the public for purchase. Individualized graphics (such as a team name, different color, player name or number only changes for a team or player), however, do not constitute custom bats for purposes of this rule.

### **13.02.C.9**

Worn / Abused / Damaged / Foreign Substance Bats Not Allowed in USSSA Sanctioned Play:

#### **13.02.C.9(a)**

No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if it is damaged in any way. Damaged bats include those with damage to the knob or end cap, those which have loose knobs or end caps, and those with cracks or dents in the bat material. For example, if the end cap is in any way loose or appears damaged, the bat should be removed from play for being a damaged bat. If an end plug has come out or the knob has come off, the only way that such bat is legal in USSSA play, is if the knob or end cap is replaced by the manufacturer. Replacement by anyone else results in an altered bat with potential suspension for the owner/user of the bat.

#### **13.02.C.9(b)**

No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if any of the graphics of the bat have worn off. For example, even if the only graphics that have worn off are not Key Graphic Information and are only items such as the patent no., a manufacturer logo, or the approval mark of another association, the bat should be removed from play for being too worn.

**13.02.C.9(c)**

No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if the paint has been worn through and the actual bat material is showing. For example, if at the end of the barrel next to the taper where there are no graphics the bat paint is worn off and the underlying bat material is exposed, that bat should be removed from play for being too worn.

**13.02.C.9(d)**

No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if there is a foreign substance on the barrel or taper of a bat. Foreign substances included among other substances, pine tar, stick-em type products and even dirt or mud, but only if the substance adds to the thickness of the barrel or covers Key Graphic Information such as the

USSSA 1.15 BPF mark, the serial number of the bat, the model or manufacturer name, official softball, etc. Players are responsible for their equipment and must clean such substances off of their bats so that the substance does not add to the thickness of the bat or obscure any Key Graphics Information about the bat.

For example, while bats shall surely get dirt on them under normal use and may have pine tar added to the grip, if the dirt or pine tar obscures Key Graphic Information or adds to the thickness of the bat, such bats cannot be used in USSSA play until the dirt or pine tar has been removed to the extent necessary to make all such Key Graphic Information readable and the bat not have increased thickness. If Key Graphic Information about a bat cannot be read, the bat should not be used in USSSA play.

**13.02.C.9(e)**

If any removed bat pursuant to USSSA Rule 13.02.C.9 is brought back into play at any USSSA sanctioned event at any time, the owner and user of such bat may be suspended for up to one year for unsportsmanlike conduct. And if the worn / abused / damaged / foreign substance is apparent enough that the batter should

have been aware of it, the batter may be so suspended for bringing such a bat into the batter's box without having been warned in advance. Players are responsible for their equipment and must not use equipment that is even potentially illegal for use in USSSA sanctioned play.

**13.02.C.9(f)**

In addition to the player being suspended for unsportsmanlike conduct, coaches of youth teams may also be so suspended when their players attempt to bat with such bats. Also, coaches of adult teams which have multiple offenses under this rule may also be so suspended for failing to have his team follow USSSA

equipment rules. Please be reminded that unsportsmanlike conduct can result in a game or tournament suspension in the discretion of the Umpire or tournament director and up to a year suspension in the discretion of the State Director.

**13.02.C.10**

Youth Player Altered Bats: The parents or legal guardians of a youth player suspended pursuant to USSSA Rules 13.02.C.1 and / or 13.02.C.2 may be suspended for any time period, including life, from all USSSA sanctioned activities. If both parents are suspended, the player even after his suspension has ended pursuant to USSSA Rules 13.02.C.1 and/or 13.02.C.2 cannot participate in USSSA sanctioned activities until the suspension of one of the players parents has also ended or until the player reaches the age of eighteen (18) years old. In addition to any other penalties pursuant to USSSA Rules, any coach or manager of a youth team that has more than one suspension imposed on his players in connection with USSSA Rules 13.02.C.1 and /or 13.02.C.2 may be suspended from all USSSA activities for any time period, including life.

### **13.02.C.11**

Altered Bat: An "Altered Bat" is a bat that has had its physical structure changed, including, but not limited to:

#### **13.02.C.11(a)**

The bat has had the surface of the barrel or the taper changed in any way such as by addition of graphics, painting, repainting, removal of bat material or paint by any means including but not limited to sandpapering or applying a solvent to the surface such as fingernail polish remover or by any other means.

#### **13.02.C.11(b)**

The bat has had the plug, or the knob removed / replaced or changed in any way.

#### **13.02.C.11(c)**

The bat has had anything removed or added or inserted to the inside or outside of the bat other than tape at the handle or knob. Other examples of altering a bat would be changing or replacing manufacturers' markings or replacing the handle of a bat with a new handle.

Replacing the grip, adding tape or adding a build up to the handle is not considered altering a bat.

#### **13.02.C.11(d)**

The bat has been subjected to pressure in a manner that exceeds that of striking the bat at game speed swing speed against a USSSA approved ball traveling at game speeds. Such pressure would include, but is not limited to, compressing the bat, rolling the bat, vicing the bat or hitting the bat against an object such as a tree or pole. The bat has in any other way had its on-field performance improved by physically changing the bat (other than by hitting the bat at game condition swing speeds against a USSSA approved ball traveling at game condition speeds).

## ***RULE 14.00 – SPORTSMANSHIP & EJECTIONS***

### **14.01**

All players, coaches, managers, sponsors and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. The league/tournament director has the authority to remove anyone from the event at any time for unsportsmanlike conduct. Any player, coach, manager, sponsor or spectator whose conduct is unbecoming or abusive shall at a minimum be reprimanded with a warning. If warranted, the offending party shall be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Umpires and / or the League / Tournament Director.

### **14.02**

Any player, coach, manager, sponsor or spectator leaving their position or base, in the field, on the bench, in the dugout area or grandstands to participate in a fight, brawl or altercation shall be immediately ejected from the game and may be disbarred / suspended.

### **14.03**

Any coach, manager, sponsor or spectator ejected from a game shall immediately remove themselves from the vicinity of the playing field and / or grandstands for the remainder of the game. Any player ejected from a game shall either immediately remove themselves from the vicinity of the playing field for the remainder of the game or be confined to the dugout area for the remainder of the game at the discretion of the League / Tournament Director. Additional penalties may be assessed at the discretion of the League / Tournament Director.

**14.04**

If necessary, a team may be forced to forfeit a game and / or be removed from the league / tournament.

**14.05**

USSSA reserves the right to deny admission to or eject any person/team who USSSA, in its sole discretion, determines poses a risk to the health and safety of other participants, officials, or spectators and/or whose conduct violates any applicable code of conduct, or whose conduct is otherwise disruptive or disorderly.

***RULE 15.00 – UMPIRES*****15.01**

All leagues and tournaments played under the jurisdiction and administration of USSSA Baseball shall utilize Umpires who are registered with the Association.

***RULE 16.00 – PROTESTS*****16.01**

Umpires shall work to settle all situations on the field. Protests shall be allowed for age and pitching violations or rule interpretations only. Uniform numbers cannot be protested. Protests must be declared to the Umpire-in-Chief and then to the League / Tournament Director before the next pitch following the dispute. If a call to be protested is the last recorded out of a game or on a game ending play, the protest MUST be filed prior to the Umpires and the protesting team leaving the field of play. No protest shall be allowed following the game. League / Tournament officials shall rule on all protests and their decisions shall be final.

**16.02**

The Protest fee shall be \$100.00 CASH. The fee shall be returned only if the protest is upheld. Leagues may develop their own fee structure and methods of recording and settling protests.

***RULE 18.00 – TOBACCO & TOBACCO RELATED PRODUCTS*****18.01**

The use of ANY tobacco or any electronic smoking devices such as e-cigarettes, vape pens or atomizers shall be prohibited by all participants (including but not limited to players, manager, coaches, umpires) within the confines of the playing field and dugouts. Local facilities may have stricter policies prohibiting tobacco from facility and parking areas. These policies, if any, shall be recognized and enforced during USSSA events.

***RULE 19.00 – ITEMS NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED*****19.01**

Items not specifically covered shall be referred to the USSSA Baseball State Director with guidance from the Baseball Committee Chairman.