



Senior Softball Rules

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

USSSA LLC

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PLAYING RULES

(UPDATED 03.01.19 8:29AMCT)

1. GENERAL

- 1.1. These rules are sports specific to Senior Softball. 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. **This document has general rules and a separate section for Women's and Mixed specific rules.**
- 1.3. Current Rules can be found at <http://www.usssa.com/slowpitch/seniors/rules>
- 1.4. **USSSA Team Registration**
 - 1.4.1. \$55 annual team registration fee. (If registering on-line, there is a \$5 processing fee added to the registration)

2. EQUIPMENT

- 2.1. **Ball** - 12" COR44, 400 psi Compression - USSSA/GSL Senior Stamped. Optic Yellow in color. Stitches to be alternating blue/white.
 - 2.1.1. **(EXCEPTION)** If the USSSA Senior Stamped ball described above is not manufactured and ready for distribution, a USSSA/GSL stamped approved Classic M ball or a USSSA Senior Stamped Ball may be used. An announcement will be made when the official balls are available for use.
 - 2.1.2. World Tournaments Only: When a game is played on a Stadium Size Field only, ball specs may be used as determined by USSSA.
- 2.2. **Bats**
 - 2.2.1. 40+ and Above
 - 2.2.1.1. 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.
 - 2.2.1.2. May also use the 1.20 USSSA Stamped Bats.
 - 2.2.2. The 35 age group ONLY
 - 2.2.2.1. Will be required to use the 1.20 BPF USSSA Stamped Bats.
- 2.3. **Pitching Screen** - If used, a pitching screen can not exceed 7' tall and 3'6" wide.
- 2.4. **Safety Base (1st Base)** -Size as provided by the park if provided.
- 2.5. **Safety Scoring Mat**- Standard Home Plate
- 2.6. **Strike Zone Mat** - Mat specs are 35" long x 21" wide.

3. TEAM AGE/CLASSIFICATIONS

- 3.1. **Age Divisions:** 35+, 40+, 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+, 70+
- 3.2. **Classifications:** Conference, Major, AAA, and AA in each age division.

3.3. 65+ & 70+divisions get 11 players on the playing field.

4. PLAYING FIELD

4.1. Base Distance

4.1.1. 70 Feet

4.2. Home Plate Commitment Line

4.2.1. Intersecting the 3rd base line 30' from home plate. 6' line, with 3' on both sides of the 3rd base line.

4.3. Pitchers Box

4.3.1. A 6-foot box is to be used for the pitcher.

4.3.2. Front-Center of box to be at the pitchers plate and advancing toward 2nd base.

4.4. Safety Scoring Mat/Line

4.4.1. A mat shall be placed perpendicular to the 3rd base line and in line with the 1st base line.

4.4.2. It shall be 9'6" from the top left corner of the home plate.

4.4.3. In lieu of a mat, a 9'6" line may be drawn from home plate and used as the Scoring Line.

5. PLAYING RULES

5.1. **These rules are intended for National Events and Senior Conference NIT's. Local events may have specific rules that must be approved by the National Program Director.**

5.2. **Batter** Starts with a 1-1 count with no foul "Exception" to rule, if batter hits the screen on 3rd strike it is considered a no pitch. If a batted ball hits the screen a second time after 2 strikes, then the batter is out.

5.3. Game Time Limits

5.3.1. **Bracket Games** - A 70 minute time limit will be in effect for all bracket games. After 70 minutes the teams will complete the inning they are in and play one more inning. If tied, the game will continue until a winner is determined.

5.3.2. **Championship Games** - The championship games and if necessary games will not have a time limit.

5.4. **Home Team when Seeding Into Bracket Play** - When pool play is used to seed teams into bracket play, in each bracket game, the highest seeded team from pool play will have be the home team

5.4.1. Exceptions::

5.4.1.1. **Championship Game** - In the championship game, the team from the winners bracket will be the home team.

5.4.1.2. **IF Game** - In an If Game is needed, the home team will be determined by a flip of a coin.

5.5. **Strike Zone Mat** will be used. It is a strike if the ball lands on the Strike Zone Mat.

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

5.7. Run Limit Per Inning

5.7.1. Conference/7, Major/5, AAA/5, AA/5

5.7.2. Last inning, unlimited runs are allowed

5.8. **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.

5.9. **Run Rule** - 15 Runs after five innings of play or 4 ½ If home team.

5.10. **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.

- 5.11. **1st Base Safety Base** will be used when available and provided by the park.
 - 5.11.1. On a force out the defender is required to tag the white base. The runner is required to tag the Safety Base.
 - 5.11.2. Blocking the runners path to the Safety Base is considered interference and the runner is awarded the base.
 - 5.11.3. 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.
- 5.12. **Sliding or Diving**
 - 5.12.1. Players may not slide or dive into home plate. If they do, they are called out.
 - 5.12.2. Sliding or Diving into 1st base, 2nd base or 3rd base base is NOT an out.
- 5.13. **Safety Scoring Mat** will be used. If a runner touches the home plate mat, the runner is out.
 - 5.13.1. All plays at home plate are considered a forced out. If the runner has not gone beyond the commit line, then normal rules will be in play.
 - 5.13.2. The defender may stand on or tag any part of the home plate. If the runner is beyond the commit line or the runner is required to acquire home, the runner will be considered retired (out) if the defender possesses the ball.
 - 5.13.3. Once the runner is beyond the commit line, the defensive player may not tag the runner. If a tag attempt is made, the runner will be considered safe.
 - 5.13.4. Defensive team must always use the home plate mat. If there is an attempt to tag a runner out, the runner is automatically safe.
- 5.14. **Home Plate Commitment Line** will be used. Once a runner is past the commitment line, the runner is out by touching the home plate mat with the ball.
- 5.15. **Pitching Rules**
 - 5.15.1. 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.
 - 5.15.2. A pitchers box will be utilized.
 - 5.15.3. A pitching screen will be team optional. Team must furnish their own net.
 - 5.15.4. If a pitching screen is used, the pitcher must be behind the screen when the batter makes contact with the ball.
 - 5.15.5. 1 warning will be given to the pitcher before he is removed from the position for the rest of the game – no ejection
 - 5.15.6. If no 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.
 - 5.15.7. Any batted ball hitting the screen will be a dead ball and a foul.
 - 5.15.8. Pitching Screen Placement
 - 5.15.8.1. May be no more than 3 feet toward home plate from the pitcher's plate and must cover at least half the pitcher's plate "left to right".
 - 5.15.8.2. Screen may not be moved once the first pitch of the inning is thrown.
 - 5.15.8.2.1. Exceptions
 - 5.15.8.2.1.1. A new pitcher enters the game.
 - 5.15.8.2.1.2. The screen is hit by a batted ball and it moves and needs to be readjusted.

- 5.15.8.2.1.3. The screen is moved by a defensive player during a play and needs to be readjusted.

5.16. **Safety Equipment**

- 5.16.1. All players, including pitchers, are encouraged to wear the recommended additional protective safety equipment, comprised of head gear (NOCSAE approved), heart/chest protection and shin guards. Players are not required to wear the recommended safety equipment.
- 5.16.2. 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. The mandated face mask is designed to prevent injuries to the player's face, but not all injuries can be prevented. Players can still suffer serious injury while wearing any type of face protection.

5.17. **Defensive Players**

- 5.17.1. Ages 65+ & 70+ will be allowed to have eleven (11) players on defense. All eleven (11) must be in the batting order.
- 5.17.2. In World Tournaments only played on "Stadium" fields, eleven (11) players may be used in all ages.

6. **HOME RUN RULES**

- 6.1. Conference-10; Major-6; AAA-3, AA-0
- 6.2. Homeruns over the limit are an out.

7. **DESIGNATED HOME RUN HITTER RULE**

- 7.1.1. In Classes AAA and Above before the game a team has the right to designate a batter in the line up 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.

8. **EQUALIZER RULES**

- 8.1. When a lower class team is playing a higher class team, these rules will be applied:
 - 8.1.1. The lower class team will be awarded: Five (5) runs per game (Awarded one (1) run an inning for the first 5 innings)
 - 8.1.2. The lower class team will be allowed two (2) "open" innings.
 - 8.1.2.1. The first (1st) inning.
 - 8.1.2.2. The last inning. If time expires before a complete game, the umpire will determine the "last" inning for "open" inning.
 - 8.1.3. 11th Player Option - The lower class team can opt for an 11th defensive player but forfeit options 8.1.1. and 8.1.2
 - 8.1.4. 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 class team in each class will receive first (1st) place points for the event regardless of their actual finish.

9. **ROSTER**

9.1. **Player Age Exceptions**

- 9.1.1. Age 70+ will be allowed four (4) 69 year old players on the roster.
- 9.1.2. Age 75+ will be allowed five (5) 74 year old players on the roster.

- 9.1.3. Age 80+
 - 9.1.3.1. Will be allowed seven (7) 78-79 year old players on the roster.
 - 9.1.3.2. Only three (3) of the younger players can be 78 year olds.

9.2. **Player(s) allowed outside of bordering states**

- 9.2.1. Conference will be allowed 4 from outside bordering states.
- 9.2.2. Major will be allowed 2 players from outside bordering states.
- 9.2.3. AAA/AA will be allowed 1 player from outside bordering states.
- 9.2.4. 70+ ages and above have no restrictions on players from outside bordering states.
- 9.2.5. International Players will not count towards the outside bordering states limits.
- 9.2.6. There will be a sponsor exemption that must be approved by the Senior Softball Committee.

9.3. You are allowed to have a max of 3 players from the classification level above the team's current level.

9.4. Starting in October each year, a team may use players that age up in the next calendar year.

10. WOMEN'S PROGRAM

10.1. **THESE RULES DESIGNATE EXCEPTIONS TO THE PLAYING RULES LISTED ABOVE. ALL OTHER RULES SHOWN ABOVE WILL APPLY AS SHOWN.**

10.2. **EQUIPMENT**

- 10.2.1. **BALL** - 11" COR44, 400 psi Compression - USSSA Senior Stamped. Optic Yellow in color. Stitches to be alternating blue/white.
- 10.2.2. **(EXCEPTION)** If the USSSA Senior Stamped ball described above is not manufactured and ready for distribution, a USSSA/GSL stamped approved Classic W ball or a USSSA Senior Stamped Ball may be used. An announcement will be made when the official balls are available for use.

10.3. **TEAM AGE/CLASSIFICATIONS**

10.3.1. 7 Age Divisions: 35+, 40+, 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+, 70+

10.4. **OVER-RUN** - In the Women's 70+ divisions only, the baserunner may over-run any base without being in jeopardy, if she returns to that base without attempting to advance.

10.5. **OFFICIAL DIAMOND**

- 10.5.1. Women's 65+ & 70+ divisions
 - 10.5.1.1. Base distances shall be 60 feet when park facilities allow
 - 10.5.1.2. Outfield fence distance shall be a maximum of 250 feet and a minimum of 200 feet when park facilities allow.
 - 10.5.1.3. Pitching Box - The front of the pitcher's box will be set at 45 feet and extend to 55 feet from home plate.

10.6. **PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

- 10.6.1. Womens Divisions 50+, 55+, 60+ and 65+
 - 10.6.1.1. A maximum of ten (10) players on defense
 - 10.6.1.2. A minimum of nine (9) players to start a game
 - 10.6.1.3. A minimum of eight (8) players to finish a game
- 10.6.2. Womens Divisions 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+, and 70+:
 - 10.6.2.1. A maximum of eleven (11) players on defense
 - 10.6.2.2. A minimum of nine (9) players to start a game
 - 10.6.2.3. A minimum of eight (8) players to finish a game
- 10.6.3. Women's Division 70+:
 - 10.6.3.1. A maximum of twelve (12) players on defense
 - 10.6.3.2. A minimum of eleven (11) players to start a game

- 10.6.3.3. A minimum of ten (10) players to finish a game
- 10.6.3.4. RE-ENTRY RULE - A player may leave and re-enter the game unlimited times WITHOUT PENALTY. The batting order must remain the same.
- 10.7. **HOME RUN AND INNING RUN LIMITS** - For all Women's play, all over the fence home runs count. A maximum of five runs per team per inning will be allowed (unlimited in the last declared inning and all extra innings).
- 10.8. **COURTESY RUNNER** - In the Women's 70+ age divisions, the same player may serve as a courtesy runner an unlimited number of times per half inning.
- 10.9. **EQUALIZER** – In the women's program, the above equalization rule 5.0 may be in effect when teams are playing in mixed divisions.
- 10.10. **ROSTERS** - There are no geographical restrictions and double-rostering is allowed.
 - 10.10.1. 70+ teams may have three players 68 and/or 69.

11. MIXED PROGRAM

- 11.1. **THESE RULES DESIGNATE EXCEPTIONS TO THE PLAYING RULES LISTED IN RULES 1-8. ALL OTHER RULES SHOWN IN RULES 1-8 WILL APPLY AS SHOWN.**
- 11.2. **EQUIPMENT**
 - 11.2.1. **BALL** - Men shall hit the ball as described in the Men's Program above. Women shall hit the ball as described in the Women's Program above.
- 11.3. **ROSTERS**
 - 11.3.1. Females
 - 11.3.1.1. 70+ teams may have three players 68 and/or 69.
- 11.4. **DEFENSE**
 - 11.4.1. 10 Players on defense.
 - 11.4.2. Can start with 9 and 4 may be female.
 - 11.4.3. Positions
 - 11.4.3.1. Battery must be Male/Female.
 - 11.4.3.2. Infield must be 2 Male/2 Female.
 - 11.4.3.3. Defense must be behind base paths when pitch is made.
- 11.5. **LINE UP**
 - 11.5.1. Can bat 12 players
 - 11.5.2. All defensive positions must bat.
 - 11.5.3. Can not have more males than females except when starting with 9 of which 4 may be female.
- 11.6. **BATTING**
 - 11.6.1. Alternate male female batters
 - 11.6.2. If Male player is "walked"
 - 11.6.2.1. He is awarded 1st and 2nd base.
 - 11.6.2.2. Female players have the option of being awarded 1st base or batting.
- 11.7. **COURTESY RUNNERS**
 - 11.7.1.1. 2 Per Inning. Must be last out.
- 11.8. **HOME RUN RULE**
 - 11.8.1. Refer to Rule 8.
- 11.9. **RUN RULE** - 12 after 5 innings or 4 ½ innings if the home team.