

USA SOFTBALL™

2017 USA Softball Rule Changes with Comments as of November 18, 2016

NOTE: All changes below are EFFECTIVE January 1, 2017 unless otherwise noted.

Rule 2, Section 1: Note: Junior Olympic Fast Pitch 8-Under. The region hosting the Regional Championship Final will establish the base, pitching and fence distances. This will also apply to all of the USA Softball Rules.

Comment: Establishes a Regional Championship Final for USA Softball 8-Under Junior Olympic Classification of Play, with the host region establishing the playing rules for the Championship.

Rule 2 Section 3D: The catcher's box shall be as wide as the two batter's boxes from outside line to outside line, 8'5" for Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch and 10'5" feet wide for 16" Slow Pitch. **The length of the Fast Pitch catcher's box will be 7' and 10' long in Slow Pitch.**

Comment: Changes the depth of the catcher's box for all Fast Pitch Divisions of Play to seven feet.

Rule 3 Section 3E Exception: (Slow Pitch Only) It is acceptable for the ball to be molded and the molded facsimile of no fewer than 88 stitches that must be red in color.

Comment: Better defines the characteristics of a 12" molded ball in the Men's Slow Pitch Classification of Play.

Rule 3 Section 3F Exception: (Slow Pitch Only) It is acceptable for the ball to be molded and the molded facsimile of no fewer than 80 stitches that must be red in color.

Comment: Better defines the characteristics of a 11" molded ball in the Women's Slow Pitch Classification of Play

Rule 3, Section 3F[2]: Beginning January 1 2017 the 11" .520 COR or under with a compression of 300.0 lbs. or under will be the only ball allowed in Women's Adult Slow Pitch, Coed Women's Slow Pitch and Junior Olympic Girls and Boys Slow Pitch.

Comment: The 11" ball with a COR.440 or under, with a ball compression of 375.0 lbs. or under will no longer be allowed in Women's Adult Slow Pitch Divisions of Play, Women's Adult Coed Slow Pitch Classification of Play, Junior Olympic Girls, 12-Under, 14-Under, 16-Under, 18-Under Slow Pitch Classifications of Play, Junior Olympic Boys, 10-Under and 12-Under Slow Pitch Classifications of Play.

Rule 3 Section 6 Exception: Men's D Slow Pitch, Men's E Rec Slow Pitch, **Women's Open** Slow Pitch, Women's C and D Slow Pitch and Coed C and D Slow Pitch: the only uniform requirement is matching shirt with number.

Comment: Adds Women's Open Slow Pitch Classification of Play to the exception on uniforms that only need matching shirts with numbers.

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Rule 4 Section 1C [3C&D] Senior Slow Pitch Exception: Age 65-Over may use either **10 or 11 defensive players for the Championship**, at the discretion of the Championship Director.

Comment: Allows 65-Over Classification of Play to have the option of using 10 or 11 defensive players at the discretion of the Championship Director.

Rule 4 Section 2 These Rules shall be subject to requests for reasonable modification for purposes of complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) unless such modifications would change the fundamental nature of the activity or would pose a significant risk to the safety of other participants. A person who, because of a disability, would like a reasonable modification to the Rules in order to participate should advise the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer of the requested modification, why it is needed, and how the modification would avoid disability discrimination, including how the modification will address the player's specific disability. Such modification requests should be made sufficiently in advance so that an individualized inquiry may be undertaken to decide whether to allow the requested modification. Such an inquiry will include consideration of the participant's specific circumstances and the purpose of the rule, policy, or practice at issue. It is highly recommended that participants provide notice of such requests to the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer sufficiently in advance of and prior to or during the league or tournament

Comment: Updates the ADA rule.

Rule 4 Section 2B In appropriate circumstances, the following Rules may be used in the event a person is determined to be an ADA Player. In order for these ADA Flex Player, EP and DP rules to apply, the ADA player's specific disability shall correspond to the need for the application of these Flex Player, EP and DP rules.

Comment: Better defines what the ADA allows in our game of Softball.

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Rule 4 Section 2J A participant who is hearing-impaired may use a sign language interpreter or other auxiliary hearing aid during play to assist that hearing-impaired participant. A sign language interpreter shall be allowed in the dugout, on the field of play (fair and foul territory), or in other areas in order to be able to provide communication to the hearing-impaired participant, but such sign language interpreter shall be subject to any other rules, policies or practices generally applicable to participants, including submitting to and passing an annual background check screening, if applicable. Any concerns, issues or requests concerning the specific location of such interpreters on the field of play shall be resolved by the umpire(s) during gameplay and such concerns or requests shall be addressed to and resolved by the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer in advance of gameplay. It is highly recommended that participants provide notice of such requests to the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer sufficiently in advance of and prior to or during the league or tournament registration process prior to the start of a season or tournament.

Comment: Add wording to the ADA rule for the hearing-impaired.

Rule 5 Section 9C (Men's Senior Slow Pitch Only) All age groups will have a maximum number of runs allowed per inning except for the seventh inning, the last inning of a time limit game or any extra inning. The Major **and Major Plus** will have a maximum of 7 runs and the AAA & AA Divisions will have a maximum of 5 runs. The seventh inning, the last inning of a time limit game or any extra innings will have unlimited runs allowed.

Comment: Adds Major Plus Classification of Play to those that allow only 7 runs per inning.

Rule 5 Section 10 When the time limit rule is in effect time begins with the first **warm up** pitch....

Comment: Better defines when the time limit begins.

Rule 5 Section 12D No person may knowingly possess or have under his/her control a weapon or explosive device on the playing field or in the dugout. For purposes of this subsection, a "weapon" means any firearm or any weapon of the kind usually known as slung shot, sand club, or metal knuckles, or any knife, dagger, dirk, or other similar weapon that is capable of causing death or bodily injury and is commonly used with the intent to cause death or bodily injury, but the definition of weapon shall specifically exclude an ordinary pocket knife or any softball-related equipment.

Comment: Adds wording to include weapons being banned from the dugout and playing field.

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Rule 5 Section 12E A participant who is hearing-impaired may use a sign language interpreter or other auxiliary hearing aid during play to assist that hearing-impaired participant. A sign language interpreter shall be allowed in the dugout, on the field of play (fair and foul territory), or in other areas in order to be able to provide communication to the hearing-impaired participant, but such sign language interpreter shall be subject to any other rules, policies or practices generally applicable to participants, including submitting to and passing an annual background check screening, if applicable. Any concerns, issues or requests concerning the specific location of such interpreters on the field of play shall be resolved by the umpire(s) during gameplay and such concerns or requests shall be addressed to and resolved by the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer in advance of gameplay. It is highly recommended that participants provide notice of such requests to the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer sufficiently in advance of and prior to or during the league or tournament registration process prior to the start of a season or tournament.

Comment: Defines the use of an interpreter for the hearing-impaired in and out of the dugout.

Rule 6C Section 1B (Seniors) The pitcher may take a position from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to **ten** feet behind the pitcher's plate within the 24 inch width of the pitcher's plate with both feet firmly on the ground.

Comment: Extends the pitching position in Senior Slow Pitch Classification of Play from 6' from behind the pitcher's plate to 10' behind the pitcher's plate.

Rule 7 Section 1A Exception: Men's Fast Pitch, Men's Modified Pitch, **Women's Fast Pitch** and all Junior Olympic Fast Pitch Divisions of Play may use either on-deck circle **as long as the on-deck batter is behind the batter and not on the batter's open side.**

Comment: Adds the Women's Fast Pitch Classification of Play the ability to use either on-deck circle and clarifies the rule when the on-deck batter can use the opposite on-deck circle.

Rule 8 Section 9C [2C] A second courtesy runner **or substitute** is not permitted at this time.

Comment: Clarifies that in Adult Slow Pitch Divisions of Play a substitute cannot be used for a courtesy runner.

Rule 10 Section 5 Removes the umpire uniform from the Rule Book.

Comment: Requires the umpire uniform requirements to be placed in the Umpire Manual.