Senior Softball USA 2015-16 Official Rule Book Amendments

NOTE: New or changed provisions appear in **bold** typeface.

TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS & RULE BOOK CORRECTIONS

1.1 • APPEAL PLAY

An appeal play is a play on which an umpire may not make a decision until requested by a manager, coach or player. The appeal must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch, **before a walk** or before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area. On the last play of the game, an appeal can be made until the umpires leave the field of play.

1.13 • CHOPPED BALL

A chopped ball occurs when the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion of the bat so that the ball bounces high into the air. EFFECT: The player will be called out **and the ball is dead**.

1.15 • COMMITMENT LINE

A three-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: (a) cannot return to third base; (b) must continue home; (c) can no long be tagged out by the defensive player; the defensive player must touch the strike zone mat. **The ball remains live.**

1.23 • FAIR TERRITORY

Fair territory is that part of the playing field within, and including, the first and third base foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards. (NOTE: Any batted ball first hitting any portion of the strike mat then settling in fair territory is a fair ball. **Fair territory includes the strike mat.**)

1.37 • INTENTIONALLY DROPPED FLY BALL

If a fielder intentionally drops, or lets drop, a fair fly ball, including a line drive, that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort with first base only, or first base and any other base(s), with less than two outs, only one recorded out may be made on the play **and the ball is dead**. This is an umpire's judgment call.

5.4 • REGULATION GAME

A. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings, **or in the event of a weather shortened game, four and one-half innings with the home team ahead or five innings with the visiting team ahead**. A full seven innings need not be played if the home team scores more runs in six and one-half innings and/or goes ahead in scoring before the third out is made in the bottom of the seventh inning. The last inning of a game shall be an open inning. (See §5.5(1))

6.11(1) • PENALTY FOR ILLEGAL PITCHES

Any infraction of §6.3 through **§6.10** is an illegal pitch. A ball shall be called on the batter. Runners may not advance. EXCEPTION: If a batter swings at any illegal pitch, it is nullified and the result of the play stands.

7.1 • BATTING ORDER

A. The batting order of each team showing the players' **last name and first initial or name**, uniform numbers and positions must be on the listed on the game card and must be completed and delivered to the plate umpire before the game. The plate umpire shall submit it to the inspection of the manager or captain of the opposing team.

RULE CHANGES AMENDED LANGUAGE

1.21 • EQUALIZER

When teams of a single unequal age or skill rating play, the older or lower-rated team receives an equalizer, at its election, of five runs (allocated at one run per inning played for innings two through six) OR an 11th defensive player. If the teams are two or more age or ratings levels unequal, the older or lower rated team will receive both the five-run equalizer and the 11th defensive player. In age divisions that already play 11 defensive players, the equalizer shall be five runs only for a single rating or age difference, and seven runs (allocated at one run for each of the first seven, only, innings played) in the case of two or more age or rating differences. EXCEPTION: Men's 40-Masters division shall have a runs-only equalizer, and not an 11th defensive player option. **NOTE: The team giving the equalizer shall be designated the home team.**

1.31 • HOME TEAM

The home team shall be designated by mutual agreement or by a flip of a coin. **EXCEPTION: In the case of a team giving an equalizer to an opponent, the team giving the equalizer shall be designated the home team (See definition §1.21)**

5.5(2) • FLIP-FLOP RULE

This rule **shall** be invoked in **any** game, **including championship game(s),** with a 10-run differential in favor of the visiting team at the start of the "open inning." The visiting team must be ahead by ten or more runs at the beginning of the open inning **or at the start of the seventh inning of a championship game**. If the visiting team is ahead by ten or more runs, the home team will remain at bat and start a new at-bat (beginning its seventh or last inning at-bat), meaning all runners then 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.

6.16 • WIND OR SUN AFFECTING BOTH PITCHERS OR SUN AFFECTING BATTERS

A. **PITCHERS:** In significantly windy conditions, if, in the judgment of the umpire, the wind is having a discernible adverse effect on the accuracy of both pitchers, the umpire may declare that only strikes count. In the case of sun interference potentially affecting the pitcher's safety, the umpire may invoke a short suspension of play.
B. **BATTERS: If in the judgment of the umpire, the sun is adversely affecting the ability of batters to see the ball, the umpire may request that the field director allow the pitcher to pitch from up to**

six feet on either side of the pitching rubber, on the side chosen by the batter. EFFECT: Softball is an outdoor game played in the elements. Sun position affecting the batter is not a potential safety issue and shall not be the basis for a suspension of play. **The decision of the field director granting or denying the request is final and not subject to protest or appeal. If the request is granted, the option shall be imposed only at the top of a new inning and applied on a full inning basis only.**

6.19 • CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES *(NEW)*

The consumption of alcoholic beverages in the dugouts or within the confines of the playing field is prohibited. EFFECT: The penalty shall be the ejection of the player for the remainder of the team's games for that day.

8.4(x) • HOME RUN OVER FENCE – MEN'S 40-MASTERS DIVISION *(NEW)*

The Men's 40-Masters division shall have the following home run limits:

1. **MAJOR-PLUS – Ten per team per game**
2. **MAJOR – Eight per team per game**
3. **AAA – Six per team per game**

NOTE: Each home run over the limit is a dead ball out and base runners cannot advance.

8.4(7) • FOUR-BASE AWARD

Any fair ball touched by a player on either side of the fence that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory before touching the ground will be a "four-base award," and will not be included in the total over-the-fence home run count. **NOTE: The batter may return directly to the dugout and all other runners may return directly to the dugout. EFFECT: The concept known as "hit and sit" is permitted.**

13.1(1) • DIVISIONS OF THE SSWC *(NEW)*

E. For men's teams age 70+ and above, the player's team rating affiliation history shall be based on the current season and the immediately preceding full season. EFFECT: The rating affiliation history follows the player for the current and one full season instead of two.

13.1(3) • TEAM REGIONS OF SSWC

A. Bordering States Rule (See Adjoining States/Province List on pages 74-75): All men's 50+ to 70+ teams may be comprised of players from their home state or neighboring states (See illustration). **EXCEPTION: The Northeast states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont shall be merged with New York and treated as a single state for the application of the state and bordering states/provinces roster composition rules.**

13.2(4) • AGE ELIGIBILITY AND GROUPING

The age a player attains on his birthday in any particular year is considered to be his age for that entire calendar year. A player must meet the minimum age of the group in which he competes, but may play in any younger age group(s). See exceptions under B, C and E in this section.

It is the dual responsibility of the player and team manager to ensure that a player's name does not appear on more than one qualifying tournament team roster per age group (See §4.2(6)). Penalty is covered under Acts of Disqualification, §15 of the "Official Guide."

A. Men's age groups are 40+ Masters, 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+, 70+, 75+, 80+ and 85+.

B. For the **2016** season **and thereafter**, Men's 75+ age division teams may draw **four** players aged **74**. For the 2016 season and thereafter, Men's 80+ age division teams **may draw four players aged 79**.
C. Men's 85+ age division teams may draw up to ten players aged 83 or 84, including not more than five 83 year olds.

13.1(1) • DIVISIONS OF THE SSWC

A. Major-Plus division – Comprised of teams that compete to determine the World Champion, Major-Plus division. A Major-Plus team rating is determined by the Senior Softball-USA Ratings Committee. Major-Plus division teams:
   1. Need not qualify**. NOTE: Major-Plus teams in age groups 50+ through 65+ may not play in a younger age group at the Major rating level in the Eastern or Western National Championships or the World Masters Championships.**
   2. Have a seven-run limit per inning, except for the final inning of the game in which each team may score unlimited runs.
   3. Major-Plus players may not compete on AAA or AA teams without written permission from SSUSA.
   4. May be invited to the World Masters Championships based upon their SSWC rating.

14.1 C. • INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

All-Tournament award patches shall be presented to the teams for recognition of individual players **at the World Masters Championships** as follows:

First Place	Five players
Second Place	Four players
Third Place	Three players
Fourth Place	Two players

All-Tournament awards patches for all other TOC Qualifier events shall be awarded only to the first (5 players), second (4) and third (3) place teams.

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