



SSUSA 2016 NATIONAL RULES COMMITTEE

November 30 - December 2, 2016
Las Vegas, Nevada

MEMBERS PRESENT • Donna McGuire (MO/Chair/ Regional U.I.C.) • Bill Ruth (WA/SSUSA President)
• Terry Hennessy (CA/SSUSA C.E.O.) • Fran Dowell (CA/SSUSA Executive Director) • Michael Boone
(NJ/National Director) • Dave Dowell (CA/National Director) • Carl Gustafson (CA/Regional Director)
• Mike Hula (NV/LVSSA) • Roger Ogden (NV/LVSSA) • Randy Rowe (MO/Regional Director) • Otis
Rowland (OK/National Director) • Rick Seifman (AZ/National U.I.C.)

MEMBERS ABSENT • Don Brooks (TX/National Director) • Jerry Jackson (IL/National Director)

ALTERNATES • Ron Grassi (WA/National Director) • Tim McElroy (MD/National Director)

RULES COMMITTEE OPEN PUBLIC SESSION - November 30, 2016

GENERAL ITEMS –

- Welcome remarks from Committee Chair Donna McGuire and an announcement that Alternates Ron Grassi and Tim McElroy would replace Don Brooks (absent) and Jerry Jackson (conflicted by ISA business meetings) for the 2016 sessions.
- Self-introductions by Committee Members and the public membership observers and participants attending.

PRIOR YEAR BUSINESS –

- Approval of 2015 Rules Committee Meeting Minutes (reading of Minutes waived, followed by unanimous vote to approve)

NEW BUSINESS –

- General discussion and review of approximately 40 [1] correspondence items received from the membership via email, written correspondence and [2] public attendee topics for consideration submitted during this session.
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RULES COMMITTEE WORKING SESSIONS - December 1-2, 2016

MEMBER ARRIVING THURSDAY • Carl Gustafson (CA / Regional Director)

WORKING SESSIONS ACTIONS –

The Chair allowed limited continued public participation (but no voting privileges) in these working sessions due to the quality of their contributions during the prior public session. The following items were formally considered and acted upon by the Committee:

§6.2 • PITCH COUNT – On a trial basis for 2017 ONLY, the starting pitch count for MEN’S & WOMEN’S 40-MASTERS division play will be the “1-1” starting count, with NO waste foul. The Rules Committee will re-evaluate the results of this trial at the 2017 committee sessions. • **PASSED: 8-4**

§8.4(1) • BATTER-RUNNER REACHING FIRST BASE – Proposed amendment to allow for a Courtesy Runner from home to 1st Base in the case of a player with a certification as an ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act) player. • **FAILED: 2-11**

§1.13 (Definition) – CHOPPED BALL – Definition amended at the end of the EFFECT to clarify and affirmatively state that the ball is dead • **PASSED: 12-0-1 abstaining**

§8.4(5) – HOME RUN OVER THE FENCE – Proposal to amend the concept of “Hit and Sit” to include a ground rule double in addition to an out of the park home run or four-base-award. • **FAILED: 2-11**

§6.17 – PITCHERS MANDATED MINIMUM SAFETY EQUIPMENT – Minor changes in wording and a re-ordering of the subpart §6.17(1) header to clarify the intent and the players affected. Pitchers (only) MUST wear a face mask and all players, including pitchers, are ENCOURAGED to wear the “recommended”, but not required, additional protective equipment. • **PASSED 13-0**

§13.2(4) – AGE ELIGIBILITY AND GROUPING – The underage roster composition exemptions for the Men’s 75+ and 80+ Divisions were restored to 2014 levels:

- ✓ Men’s 75+ teams may roster up to seven underage players aged 73 and 74, with not more than three being age 73; and
- ✓ Men’s 80+ teams may roster up to seven underage players aged 78 and 79, with not more than three being age 78

Effective date: **December 1, 2016** for the 2017 Tournament Season • **PASSED 13-0**

§13.3(1) – TEAM REGIONS OF SSWC – Three changes were approved. [1] The first defines only two regions for Canada, an Eastern and Western region, defined as those provinces situated on the respective east/west border between Ontario and Manitoba. [2] The second defines the State of Alaska as being included in the Western Canada region. [3] The third merges the States of Delaware and New Jersey as a single state for purposes of the states and bordering states. These changes will also be reflected in the States and Provinces bordering states chart currently on pages 74-75 of the Rulebook, • **PASSED 13-0 (for each of the three separate motions)**

§5.5(3) • MERCY RULE FOR 50+ THRU 70+ MAJOR-PLUS (ONLY) – Two proposals to amend and/or expand the current Mercy Rule to include all age and divisions of play. [1] At 15 runs after five innings • **FAILED 3-10** – and [2] At 20 runs after five innings or 15 runs after six innings • **FAILED 1-12**

§8.4(1) • BATTER-RUNNER REACHING FIRST BASE – Rule was amended to add the phrase “...must touch some portion of the double bag extending into foul territory...” in order to remove confusion by some that touching both the orange and white bag simultaneously results in an out being called. It is NOT an out. • **PASSED 12-1**

§8.8 • COMMITMENT LINE – Rule was amended to clarify that after a runner is tagged by a defender on the home plate side of the commitment line and is declared safe, it remains a live ball and he DOES NOT have to proceed to the scoring plate or cross the scoring line. • **PASSED 12-1**

§15.1(6) • FALSIFYING CREDENTIALS – Rule was amended to change the former “lifetime” ban to: “...at least 10 years from the time the player would have been otherwise eligible to participate in that age group and to allow an appeal for a reduction of the ban only after the expiration of five years from the time of his proper eligibility...” • **PASSED 13-0**

§9.1X. DEAD BALL – Rule was amended to define the effect of a batted ball striking an umpire in fair territory. If in front of, or before being touched by, an infielder: Batter awarded 1st base and on base runners advance only if forced. §9.1X. Otherwise: Live ball • **PASSED 12-1**

§8.5(5) • COURTESY RUNNER OFFICIALLY IN THE GAME – Rule amended to add that a courtesy runner must report to, and be acknowledged by, the umpire prior to entering. • **PASSED 13-0**

§13.2(4) • AGE ELIGIBILITY AND GROUPING – Rule amended to include a new provision reflecting the Women’s Senior 50+ Division will now be comprised of two rating groups, for AAA and Major Divisions of play. • **PASSED 13-0**

§13.1(3)C. • TEAM REGIONS OF SSWC – Subpart C. Amended to delete the word “Senior” from the Women’s reference. All Women’s divisions, including 40-Masters, are exempted from the states and bordering states roster composition rules • **PASSED 13-0**

§6.16 B. • WIND OR SUN AFFECTING BOTH PITCHERS OR SUN AFFECTING BATTERS – The 2015 rule amendment regarding the sun affecting the batters (only) and the provision to allow moving the pitcher laterally in limited circumstances during such occurrences was repealed. • **PASSED 13-0**

§5.11 • CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES – (*Formerly §6.19*) Two motions were presented regarding this section. [1] The rule was amended to address the consumption of marijuana. • **PASSED 13-0** – and [2] Proposal to prohibit the consumption of alcoholic beverages or marijuana during a team’s games. • **FAILED 2-13**

§1.15 (Definition) • COMMITMENT LINE – Technical amendment to lengthen the minimum length of the commitment line from three feet to six feet. • **PASSED 13-0**

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP – Donna McGuire graciously accepted the unanimous request that she serve at least one more year as the National Rules Committee Chair. • **PASSED BY ACCLAMATION**

Respectfully submitted,

DAVE DOWELL
Recording Secretary

EXHIBIT "A" • Technical Rule Book Provision Language Amendments

New wording in **REDLINE** text • Deleted former wording in **STRIKEOUT** text

§1.13 • **CHOPPED BALL (Definition)**

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 (Definition)**

A **minimum six** ~~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 longer be tagged out by the defensive player; **and** the defensive player must touch the strike zone mat.

§5.11 • **CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OR MARIJUANA** *[Formerly §6.19]*

The consumption of alcoholic beverages **or marijuana** 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.

§6.2 • **PITCH COUNT**

Batters are allowed 4 balls and/or 3 strikes. All batters start with a 0-0 ball/strike count. **EXCEPTION: On a trial basis for the 2017 playing Season, all men's and women's 40-Masters divisions will be allowed only 3 balls and/or 2 strikes, and all batters will start with a 1-1 ball/strike count. There will be NO "waste foul" available to a batter after there are two strikes in the count.**

§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.~~

§6.17 • **PITCHER'S MANDATED MINIMUM SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

Pitchers ~~shall~~ **must** wear a protective face mask while pitching and must wear the mask consistent with the manufacturer's intended usage of their product.

§6.17(1) • PLAYERS' RECOMMENDED SAFETY EQUIPMENT

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

SSUSA 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. SSUSA 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.

§6.17(2) • RELEASE (INJURY TO PLAYER) *[Note new § number – subsequent §§ re-numbered]*

By electing not to wear the recommended safety equipment, ~~the pitcher waives~~ players waive any and all claims, individually, and by his or her heirs, and holds harmless Senior Softball World Championships, Inc., its Board of Directors, Senior Softball-USA, LLC, any municipal or park facility employees, their agents or employees and tournament directors and sponsors from and against any and all loss liability, charges and expenses (including attorney's fees) and causes of action of whatever character that may arise for injury that may have been reasonably prevented by the recommended safety equipment during participation in SSWC events;

§8.4(1) • BATTER-RUNNER REACHING FIRST BASE

Each batter must reach first base without the aid of a courtesy runner. A double bag shall be used at first base, the double portion of the bag being in foul territory abutting first base. If there is a play on a batter-runner going to first base, the batter-runner must touch **some portion of** the double bag extending into foul territory. He will be called out if he fails to do so, except **if** in the umpire's judgment, the batter-runner is avoiding a collision. **The batter-runner simultaneously touching both portions of the double bag is permitted.** This is NOT an appeal play. Important: The defending player has only the white base, in fair territory, to make the putout; his touch of only the bag in foul territory will not result in an out. Once the batter-runner reaches first base, the double base shall be treated as one base and the fielder or runner may use either portion.

§8.5(5) • COURTESY RUNNER OFFICIALLY IN THE GAME

A courtesy runner must report to, and be acknowledged by, the umpire. A courtesy runner is in the game when he touches the base. If a courtesy runner is determined illegal, he will be called out upon touching the base and no other courtesy runner is allowed. The original runner may not return as the runner. An illegal courtesy runner on base is committing a continuing violation and may be called out upon appeal at any time while on base or, if he scores, prior to the first pitch to the next batter.

§8.8 • COMMITMENT LINE

A commitment line thirty feet from the scoring line or scoring plate will be used. Once a runner's foot touches the ground on or past this line, the runner is committed to advancing to the scoring line or scoring plate and may no longer be tagged out. EFFECT: Tag of the runner by a defensive player will not be allowed. The runner will be called safe, and the ball remains live and the runner is not required to touch the scoring plate or cross the scoring line. NOTE: If a runner re-crosses the commitment line for any reason in an attempt to return to third base, he will be declared out and the ball remains live.

§9.1 • DEAD BALL

X. When a fair batted ball strikes an umpire or base runner on fair ground before passing or touching an infielder. EFFECT: The batter is awarded first base and on base runners advance one base only if forced.

§13.1(3) • TEAM REGIONS OF SSWC

C. All women's senior divisions and men's 80+ and 85+ divisions have no geographic restrictions. Divisions are open, invitational divisions.

D. The following exceptions to the states/provinces and bordering states/provinces rule are permitted for roster composition for teams in the 40-Masters through 70+ age groups:

1. The Northeast states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont are merged with New York and treated as a single state;
2. The states of Delaware and New Jersey are merged and treated as a single state; and
3. Canadian provinces east of Manitoba are merged and known as the Eastern Canada region. Canadian provinces west of Ontario, and the U.S. state of Alaska, are merged and known as the Western Canada region. These regions may draw players from their U.S. bordering states, but may not draw players from the other Canada region. EXCEPTION: Major Plus teams may draw up to two players from the other Canada Region pursuant to §13.1(2)C.

§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 2017 Season and thereafter, Men's 75+ age division teams may draw three seven players under age 75, including not more than three 73 year olds. aged 79. For the 2016 2017 Season

and thereafter, Men's 80+ age division teams may draw ~~three~~ **seven players under age 80, including not more than three 78 year olds.** ~~must be comprised only of players aged 80 or older.~~

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.

D. Women's age groups are 40+ Masters, 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+ and 70+.

1. In any tournament with fewer than four 55+ teams, the 55+ teams may be combined with the 50+ or 60+ age division.

2. In any tournament with fewer than four 60+ teams, the 60+ teams may be combined with the 55+ or 65+ age division.

3. **The women's 40-Masters division shall be comprised of three rating levels: Major, AAA and AA. The women's 50+ senior division shall be comprised of two rating levels, Major and AAA. The women's senior divisions aged 55+ and older are open, un-rated divisions.**

E. Women's 70+ age division teams may draw three players aged 68 or 69; including not more than one 68 year old. Women's 65+ age division teams may add one player age 64.

§15.1(6) • FALSIFYING CREDENTIALS

Any player found falsifying credentials will be ~~permanently~~ disqualified from the SSWC and its qualifying tournaments **for at least ten seasons from the time the player would have been otherwise eligible to participate in that age group. The player is eligible to make an appeal for a reduction of the disqualification only after the expiration of five years from the time of his proper eligibility.** If the manager knowingly accepted the falsified credentials, he, too, will be suspended from the SSWC and its qualifying tournaments for the balance of the season plus the following ~~season~~ **year**, and his team will forfeit all games in the events in which the player participated.

EXHIBIT “B” • Other Topics Proposed for Consideration

The following topics were brought to the attention of the Rules Committee for potential Agenda consideration by either public member proposal at the open meetings, prior correspondence received (by email or written letters) from the public, or by Rules Committee members during the course of the sessions. There was committee discussion on all of these issues, but they failed to make it to official Agenda status due to either the lack of a motion for consideration, lack of a second to a motion for consideration, and/or the request to withdraw an active Agenda item by the sponsor and second.

The Committee is pleased with the “State of the Game” from a rules perspective and we sought to make changes only where they were mandated. The failure of any specific topic proposed to result in change has no bearing on the Committee’s perception of their importance to those who brought them to our attention. Thank you to all who took the time to appear or write. Your contributions were significant and invaluable to the Committee.

The following non-agenda items are presented in the chronological order they were discussed during the Sessions.

1. Proposal to require entry only prior to first pitch to succeeding batter and limit on number of allowable courtesy runners per inning.
2. Proposal to allow 11 defensive players for 65+ age group and possibly for all age groups.
3. Proposal to change the minimum Bracket sizes regarding automatic rating move-ups for Champions of the LVSSA/SSUSA World Masters or the SPA World Championships.
4. Proposal to create and maintain an Impact Players List for Major/Major+ rated players and to dissolve the Major+ rating category for 65+ and 70+ age groups.
5. Proposal to designate all games in a full round robin tournament format as “bracket” games for purposes of time limits at 70 minutes and two umpire staffing.
6. Proposal to add live ball to definition §1.15. (Already part of Rule §8.8)
7. Proposal to limit effective date of any roster composition rule change(s) to the beginning of the next playing season.
8. Proposal to raise the minimum number of players threshold required before a team is eligible to add “roster exception players” from 11 to 13.
9. Proposal to eliminate the award of #1 and #2 bracket seeding positions to the two teams participating in a USA National Championship games at the World Masters Championships.
10. Proposal to eliminate an automatic out the first time at bat subsequent to a player for 85+ teams leaving game for injury with no substitutes.
11. Proposal to repeal the designation of a team giving an equalizer as the “home” team.
12. Proposal to eliminate walks, making batter bat until he gets a hit, strikes out or is put out.
13. Proposal to give championship awards to a Runner-up in an event where a dominant Major+ team wins.
14. Proposal to divide the Men’s and Women’s 40-Masters Divisions into ages 40+ and 45+.
15. Proposal to clarify the timing of a allowable appeal before the next pitch if there is an ensuing intentional walk. (Already in the rules at §8.2B.)
16. Proposal to change the location of the batters boxes forward. TABLED for further study.
17. Proposal to eliminate the application of spray substance to the barrel of the bat. Already in the rules at §3.4E.
18. Proposal to allow the play in which a team scores its 5th (or 7th) run of the inning to finish, and having all runs count, even beyond the 5th or 7th run (withdrawn by proponent).
19. Proposal to ban aerosol spray cans from the field of play and prohibit using spray sticky substances.