



## SSUSA 2017 NATIONAL RULES COMMITTEE

November 29 - December 1, 2017

Auburn, Alabama

**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) • Mike Hula (NV/LVSSA) • Jerry Jackson  
(IL/National Director) • Tim McElroy (MD/National Director) • Felix Mendiola (NV/LVSSA) • George  
Moreno (SSUSA Office) • Randy Rowe (MO/Regional Director) • Rick Seifman (AZ/National U.I.C.)  
**MEMBERS ABSENT** • Don Brooks (TX/National Director) • Otis Rowland (OK/National Director)  
**ALTERNATE** • Ron Grassi (WA/National Director)

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### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF SSUSA OFFICIAL SOFTBALL SPECIFICATION • 2018**

Effective for the 2018 Tournament Season, the Official SSUSA Softball Specification is the **BSN 44 cor/375 compression Micro-Cell Technology STOTE** optic yellow softball. The change was made to address concerns regarding consistent performance in varying environmental conditions, specifically noticeable with high temperatures and/or humidity. This softball will be the official ball for all except the LVSSA/SSUSA Southwest and World Masters Championships in Las Vegas, which will use "The Rock" softball. The BSN TRUMP softball may still be used, or purchased, while supplies last.

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### **RULES COMMITTEE OPEN PUBLIC SESSION - November 29, 2016**

#### **GENERAL ITEMS** –

- Welcome remarks from Committee Chair Donna McGuire and Agenda overview.
- Self-introductions by Committee Members and the public membership observers and participants attending.

#### **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.

#### **PRIOR YEAR BUSINESS (November 30, 2017)** –

- Approval of 2016 Rules Committee Meeting Minutes (reading of Minutes waived, followed by unanimous vote to approve) for both the 2016 Convention sessions and the special telephone conference call meeting of January 11, 2017.
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## **RULES COMMITTEE WORKING SESSIONS - November 29, 2017**

**WORKING SESSIONS ACTIONS** – New provisions in **REDLINE** – Deleted provisions in **STRIKEOUT**

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 in the order presented below:

**§13.1(2)C. • PLAYERS MUST PLAY IN REGIONS** – Amendment to clarify “out of region” eligibility for 50+ through 70+ Major+ roster composition – “However, Major-Plus teams (ONLY) in the 50+ through 70+ divisions may select two players from east/west **the same side** of the Mississippi River ~~depending on~~ as the home state of the team.” – **PASSED: 12-0**

**§6.2 • PITCH COUNT** – Proposal to remove the trial basis for 2017 ONLY language regarding the starting pitch count for MEN’S & WOMEN’S 40-MASTERS division play will be the “1-1” starting count, with NO waste foul. • **FAILED: 6-7 (Tie vote broken by Chair)**

**§6.2 • PITCH COUNT** – Proposal to institute a starting pitch count for MEN’S & WOMEN’S 40-MASTERS division play to be the “1-1” starting count, with a waste foul. • **NO VOTE (Motion withdrawn for later consideration)**

**§8.5(5) • COURTESY RUNNER OFFICIALLY IN GAME** – Proposal to institute a provision designed to force courtesy runners game entry to be more efficient – “**A courtesy runner may enter the game only prior to the first pitch to any batter.**” – **PASSED: 13-0**

## **RULES COMMITTEE WORKING SESSIONS - November 30, 2017**

**§6.2 • PITCH COUNT** – Proposal to reinstate the 2017 starting pitch count for MEN’S & WOMEN’S 40-MASTERS division play to be the “1-1” starting count, with NO waste foul. • **PASSED: 9-3**

**§6.2 • PITCH COUNT** – Proposal to institute the starting pitch count for MEN’S & WOMEN’S 50+ Division of play will be the “1-1” starting count, with NO waste foul. • **FAILED: 2-10**

**§6.2 • PITCH COUNT** – Proposal to institute the starting pitch count for MEN’S & WOMEN’S 50+ Division of play will be the “1-1” starting count, with a waste foul. Following extensive discussion, the Committee voted to table the motion and instructed SSUSA Staff to complete a Membership Preference Survey regarding implementation of the 1-1 count. The results of that survey will be the basis of a special telephone conference call meeting of the Committee in January, 2018, for potential rule amendments to the 50+ and potentially other age groups. • **TABLED: 11-1**

**§3.4(7)A. • PENALTY FOR USING AN ILLEGAL BAT** – Proposal to reduce the penalty for the use of an illegal (not altered) bat to something less than a full tournament ejection • **FAILED: 5-7**

**§3.4(7)D. • PENALTY FOR USING AN ILLEGAL BAT** – Proposal to delete sub-section “D” due to being redundant to other rule book provisions – “~~The tournament officials will request the owner of the bat to surrender it for forwarding it to SSWC headquarters. A player's failure to voluntarily surrender the bat to tournament officials will result in an immediate minimum of one year suspension from play. There will be a subsequent hearing to determine if additional sanctions against the player shall be imposed, and if the bat will be returned to the player or destroyed.~~” • **PASSED 12-0**

**§5.1 • GAME TIME** – Proposal to amend Game Time rule to eliminate the inference that forfeiture language relates to being ready to play 30 minutes prior to game time . – “Teams must be present and ready to play thirty minutes prior to the stated game starting time. ~~A forfeit may be recorded against the offending team at the Tournament Director’s discretion.~~” • **PASSED: 10-2**

**§3.6 • GLOVES** – Proposal to allow the use of mitts by any defensive player – “Gloves **and mitts** may be worn by any player.” ~~but mitts may be used only by the catcher and first baseman~~ • **PASSED 12-0**

**§4.3(2) • MEN'S DIVISIONS AGE 70+ AND ABOVE AND WOMEN'S DIVISIONS AGE 50+ AND ABOVE**

Proposal to allow 85+ and older age groups to play with 12 defensive players was approved.

**A. For men’s 70+ through 80+ and women’s divisions age 50+ and above** – Eleven players constitute a team. However, a team may start a game with no fewer than ten players. An eleventh player on the roster may be added any time during the game, batting in the last (11<sup>th</sup>) position. Until the (11<sup>th</sup>) position is filled, an out will be declared only the first time that position comes to bat.

**B. For Men’s 85+ and older divisions – Twelve players constitute a team. However, a team may start a game with no fewer than eleven players. A twelfth player on the roster may be added any time during the game, batting in the last (12<sup>th</sup>) position. Until the 12<sup>th</sup> position is filled, an out will be declared only the first time that position comes to bat.** • **PASSED: 12-0**

**VARIOUS SECTIONS • MEN’S 40-MAJOR PLUS** – The Men’s 40-Major Plus division playing rules were amended to bring them into consistency with the 50+ through 70+ Major Plus rules package for [1] Seven (7) runs per ½-inning at bat, [2] Mercy/Run rule of fifteen (15) runs after five (5) innings; and [3] NO "snowbird" roster players, but up to two allowed "out of region" players. **NOTE:** Home runs remain at ten (10) allowed per team per game. • **PASSED: 11-0-1 abstention**

**§6.17 • PITCHERS MANDATED MINIMUM SAFETY EQUIPMENT** – In response to some pitchers asserting rule compliance by wearing “goggle style” minimally protective equipment, the area of the face that must be protected by a face mask was clarified – “Pitchers (only) **MUST** wear a face mask **that covers the area of the face from above the eyes to the lower part of the chin.** and all **All** players, including pitchers, are ENCOURAGED to wear the “recommended”, but not required, additional protective equipment.” • **PASSED 12-0**

**FIELD SPECIFICATIONS** – Proposal to move the strike mat back by 8½” – **FAILED: 3-8-1 abstention**

**AWARDS AT LVSSA/SSUSA WORLD MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS** – Proposal to eliminate 4<sup>th</sup> Place individual All Tourney Awards • **PASSED: 12-0**

**REFERRED TO SSUSA STAFF** – The Rules Committee, in addition to the “1-1 Pitch Count” matter above, referred the following items to SSUSA Staff for further study and analysis. Staff was instructed to provide the requested information to the committee in sufficient time to be considered at the special telephone conference call meeting in January, 2018:

- **Co-Ed Rules** – There may be co-ed teams participating on an “Exhibition” basis in the 2018 LVSSA/SSUSA World Masters Championships from outside the United States. Staff is instructed to provide illustrative co-ed rules from other sources for later consideration by SSUSA;

- **Certain Major Plus Teams** – There are a limited number of Major Plus teams that tend to dominate competitive tournament play. Staff is instructed to help identify such teams in order for the Rules Committee to consider possible rules amendments to ensure more competitive balance.
- **Women’s 45-Masters Division** – Staff is instructed to analyze the roster composition of women’s 40-Masters teams to identify which, if any, teams could populate a potential women’s 45-Masters division

**COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP** – Donna McGuire graciously accepted the unanimous request that she serve at least one more year, subject to her potential work conflicts, as the National Rules Committee Chair.

- **PASSED BY ACCLAMATION**

Respectfully submitted,

DAVE DOWELL  
Recording Secretary

## EXHIBIT “A” • 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. Starting Pitch Count recommendations – Due to this general topic being tabled for further study by SSUSA Staff and a pending Membership Preferences Survey, multiple specific proposals were deferred for later consideration, including:
  - a. Expand the 1-1 count to all ages;
  - b. Expand the 1-1 count to all other ages over a phase-in annual schedule by year by age;
  - c. Do not expand the 1-1 count to any other ages; and
  - d. Institute the 1-1 count by specific age group and rating divisions therein for ages 50+ through 60+
2. Proposal to allow up to three underage players age 69 to be eligible for 70+;
3. Allow exceptions to rigid rating rules for Major+ team members moving to lower divisions (referred to SSUSA Office eligibility specialists for implementation);
4. End the flip-flop rule being invoked during seeding games;
5. Paint the strike mat white to (purportedly) make it easier to see;
6. Allow Courtesy Runners from home to first base;
7. Clarify what constitutes a team’s first pitch of a tournament (first pitch is as described, and first game played does NOT include an un-played forfeit game in which no pitches were delivered);
8. Permit base runners to slide into the scoring plate or across the scoring line;
9. Allow the 1-up home run structure instead of maximums per game followed by dead ball outs;
10. Eliminate the #1 and #2 seed award for teams participating in the USA National Championship games at the World Masters Championships in brackets of five or more teams;
11. Reinstate the former rule allowing the pitcher to be displaced to alleviate sun in the batter’s eyes;
12. Reinstate the age 73 player exceptions for roster eligibility on 75+ teams;
13. Put the definition of the Las Vegas Open Inning rule in the book (alternative approach is to inform umpires and directors what constitutes the city limits of Las Vegas);
14. Request to allow one “out of region” player from anywhere in the USA for age 75+ teams;
15. Clarification of procedures to follow in the case of Championship games involving teams from separate ages or divisions in combined division tournaments;
16. Revise certain Three-game-guarantee brackets;
17. Allow a Courtesy Runner to run twice, for the same batter, in an Open Inning circumstance; and
18. Allow 11 defensive players for men’s 65+ divisions of play