

TOP CHOICE /ARIZONA USSSA TOURNAMENT RULES

Note: These rules are for AZ USSSA Baseball Tournaments only and May not apply for other USSSA Tournaments and World Series

2026 NEW Rules Added at all parks

We have had an increasing amount of threats and violence take place during USSSA youth events. Most have taken place between parents and are alcohol related. The private parks are not going stop selling alcohol because they can't survive without that income and have failed to deal with these fan conduct issues. We are going have to take control of this situation and put rules into place that hopefully prevent this from happening in the future. The violence at youth events is unacceptable and creates a negative experience to all spectators and players. Parks and staff also have reported that outside alcohol has been brought into all parks, this is not acceptable at any venue. It has also been brought to our attention that coaches are drinking before and in between games. That is not acceptable and will not be tolerated any longer if you plan on coaching. Here are the new AZ USSSA rules and policies:

1. No drinking before and in between games for any coach, anyone caught or suspected will be removed from coaching that day.
2. Anyone caught with outside alcohol/drugs including parking lots in all venues will be ejected from the park and local law enforcement will be notified to enforce local statues of the parks.
3. Obscene gestures and fowl language will result in offenders being ejected from the park.
4. Threats of violence or acts of violence including parking lots, will result in following penalties: 911 will be called by our staff and we will seek a police report and will most likely result in charges to be filed.

Coaches/Parents/Fans involved will be ejected from the park and face suspensions from USSSA National Office.

A Player of ejected legal guardian/parent will be taken out of the game and have to leave also.

5. Artificial Noise Makers are prohibited at Top Choice Baseball/ AZ USSSA events. Music can be played during non live ball action however the volume is not to be heard by surrounding fields. Tournament staff has the right to disallow the usage of music for the remainder of the event if deemed inappropriate or at a high volume.

It's not our goal to punish kids for out of control parents and coaches but we have no choice in the matter because we are not legal guardians and cannot take custody of children to finish a game when parents have to leave the park immediately.

Our staff is not trained as investigators; they have been instructed to eject all suspected parties involved of any violations listed above. Coaches please enforce parent conduct within your teams and set a high example for your players.

We need to create a healthy and safe environment for all those that play and attend USSSA events.

Due to excessive damage to the outfields

Any Player and Team that dig holes in the outfield will face penalties

1st Offense: Player removed from the game and can not re-enter.

2nd Offense by same Team: Manager Ejected from the game

Limit of 3 coaches outside the dug out, any others have to be inside.

No Buckets allowed outside the dugouts.

AGE DIVISIONS:

7U-18U Age divisions are based upon player's age as of May 1st, year 2026, league age. Example - 12U players cannot turn 13 prior to May 1st, 2026 to play in that division.

****If Grade eligibility is challenged, you must have documentation such as a school report card. Example: 14 year old playing 13U must have proof of a current 7th grade report card)**

Players may play up 2 ages, but not down in age. Players may only play on one team during a tournament.

REGISTRATION: All teams must check in 1 hour prior to your first scheduled game at the park your playing at. Teams will need to turn in a current USSSA Roster with manager signature and a copy of Team Insurance Coverage. No players may be penciled in. Teams will need to show a copy of Birth certificates or State issued ID card or Passport for every player on your roster. Scholastic age groups 13U-18U will need to show a current report card for players that don't meet age requirement but are in the proper grade for the division that they are competing in. Any Team knowingly using illegal players shall be subject to discipline ranging from forfeiting a game, tournament disqualification and suspension from all USSSA sanctioned leagues and tournaments for up to a year.

ROSTER GUEST PLAYER RULES: USSSA Baseball has created a guest player program which will allow teams to add up to 3 players to their USSSA roster for a weekend event. With the new guest player rules, USSSA had to make some roster rule changes to in order to facilitate this program. Starting September 9, 2020, all USSSA baseball players will only be allowed on a single team's USSSA roster. Going forward, teams may elect to add and drop players according to the USSSA Baseball rules, or they may elect to pick up players for a weekend as a guest player. For guidelines and help documents regarding the guest player

Roster / Guest Player Requirements are Located on Rules Tab

- All roster questions will be treated as a protest and will require a \$50 protest fee. If you win the protest you will receive your money back.
- The following penalty(s) could be placed on a team found to break the roster rules. The penalty is up to the Arizona USSSA State office (Tournament director).
 1. Player or players disqualified from the tourney
 2. Forfeit of games (All Fees are lost)
 3. Team disqualified from the tourney (All fees are lost)
 4. Manager suspension

******NO PARENTS ARE ALLOWED TO QUESTION ROSTERS OR RULES. MANAGER'S ONLY******

******PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTION ABOUT YOUR ROSTER******

PITCHING LIMITATIONS:

7U-12U = 6 innings in a day and 8 in the tournament

13U-14U = 7 innings in a day and 8 in the tournament.

A player that pitches more than three (3) innings in one day MUST rest the next day

15U-18U = No Limit (Use Common Sense and pitch count)

Once a player is established on the official line up card or announced during a pitching change, that is considered a full inning no matter how many outs recorded or pitches thrown.

Violation of this rule will result in the pitcher being removed from the mound. The manager will be ejected from the game and cannot participate in the next scheduled game. If a Team violates this rule a second time in a tournament, that game will be forfeited. Scorecards that are signed by each manager at the end of the game will also be used to determine pitching infractions, make sure when you sign them that the score and pitching is correct. Teams must monitor the opponents pitching and report any violations.

Once a pitcher is removed from the mound, that pitcher may not pitch again in that game.

DISTANCES: 7U/8U = 40' mound/60' bases, 9U-10U = 46' mound/65' bases, 11U-12U = 50' mound/70' bases, 13U = 54' mound/80' bases, 14U-18U = 60.6 mound/90' bases.

FORCE PLAY SLIDE RULE: A runner may slide in any direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder. Runners are never required to slide, but if a runner elects to slide, the slide must be legal. If contact is made on either side of the bag or behind the bag, the ball is immediately dead. The runner is out, interference is called and the batter/runner is also called out.

COLLISSION RULE HOME PLATE: If a defensive player has the ball in hand ready to make a tag, the offensive player must apply one of the following:

1. Proper Slide going into the base
2. Go around the defensive player
3. Give your-self up
4. Go back

LINE-UP OPTIONS:

7U-14U

(1) Bat 9 players

(2) Bat 10 players using an Extra Hitter. The EH is considered a defensive player and may switch in and out defensively.

(3) Bat entire roster – Free defensive substitution. If a player is injured or ejected, that spot in the batting order will be an automatic out.

Starters may re-enter one time only in their original batting order.

**** A DH can be used in 9U-18U**

Teams may bat a nine (9) player line-up, or a nine (9) player line-up with a Designated Hitter (DH), or a ten (10) player line-up with an Extra Hitter (EH), or a 10 player line-up up with a DH and EH, or a continuous line-up of all present, eligible, uniformed players. Such line-up must be declared before the start of the game and used the entire game. A Designated Hitter (DH) can be used for ages 9u thru 18u (Note: The DH can be used for any position player.)

Teams may play with 8 players, but an out will be recorded each time the 9th spot comes up. 9th player may be added in the 9th spot at any time during the game.

Bat Regulations:

USSSA Stamp, Wood, and USA Bat Stamp Acceptable in 7u-12u.

13U Must use a Minimum USSSA -8 or USA Stamp -8, BBCOR or Wood.

****13U Majors must use USSSA Stamp -5 or USA -5, BBCOR, or Wood during Super NIT**

14U-18U Must use BBCOR or Wood

(Teams playing up in age must use bats for that age group that they are playing in)

Illegal Bat Penalties

If an illegal bat is discovered after a fair batted ball and before the next pitch legal/illegal or play, the offended coach has the option of selecting the outcome of the play or the penalty. If he chooses the penalty then the batter is out, bat removed and all runners return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. Should a second infraction occur, then the manager is ejected, and the offended coach gets to choose the outcome of the play or the penalty again as stated.

NOTE: There shall be no penalty for discovery of an illegal bat until a fair batted ball occurs. If an

illegal bat is discovered during the ab, the bat is then removed from the game.

TIME LIMITS: Pool Play and Playoff Games: Divisions 7U-10U will play 6 innings with no new inning after 1:30. Divisions 11U-12U will play 6 innings with no new inning after 1:45. The 13U-18U divisions will play 7 innings with no new inning after 2:00.

***Please have your team ready to play up to 15 minutes prior to the posted game time in case of a run rule in a prior game. This will help us to stay on schedule.**

*CA Tie breaker in all games with extra innings or after time has expired including Championship games EXCEPT super NIT's. Refer to TIE GAMES for CA Tie Breaker Rule.

Time Limits in Gold Championships and Division Championships Championship Games are as follows:

No New Inning after:

7U-10U = 1:45

11U-12U = 2:00

13U-18U = 2:15

*Silver/Bronze will have regular scheduled time limits

TIE GAMES: Playoffs and Championship Games will be played out in extra innings or after time limit has expired using the California Tie Breaker. A runner will start at second base. Runner cannot be a player who is or was in the game, even if they are a starter with reentry remaining. If a team has no substitution, then last batted out will be the runner. Game will be played until a winner is determined. In Pool Play a tie stands and will not be played out.

RUN RULES:

15 run rule after 3 innings, 8 run rule after 4 innings in 6 inning games,

15 run rule after 3 innings, 12 run rule after 4 innings, 8 run rule after 5 innings in 7 inning games.

****Only 5 runs Max per Inning can be scored thru first 3 innings in 7U Only****

HOME TEAM: Will be determined by coin flip and will keep official scorebook with all changes going through home plate umpire. In playoff rounds, the higher seed will have choice of Home or visitor. Dugouts are not assigned; first team to arrive has choice.

METAL CLEATS: No Metal Cleats allowed in 12U and younger age divisions. NO METAL CLEATS ALLOWED on any Portable Mounds.

CATCHERS HELMET: In ALL age division, catchers must wear protective helmet that covers both ears and the back of the head. No 2 Piece helmet.

PROTEST: All protest will be ruled on immediately by tournament director and Chief umpire. Only a rule interpretation can be protested not a judgment call. A \$50 fee is required to protest a call and will be refunded if the protest is upheld.

COURTESY RUNNERS: Allowed for the pitcher or catcher at any time. The runner cannot be a player who is or was in the game, even if they are a starter with re-entry remaining. If the team has no substitution left then the last batted out can be used as a courtesy runner. Same runner cannot run for both the pitcher and catcher in the same inning.

INTENTIONAL WALKS: A defensive coach simply needs to announce to the home plate umpire that he desires to intentionally walk the batter. No pitches are thrown.

Intentionally pitch at the batter: Penalty- If the umpire believes such a violation has occurred, a

warning shall be issued to the pitcher and both opposing coaches that future violations by any pitcher will be cause for immediate ejection of the pitcher and the coach from the game.

Furthermore, if, in the umpire's judgment, the situation warrants drastic action to defuse a potentially volatile situation, the umpire may eject the pitcher without warning. Each coach should be warned, but the coach of the offending team should not be ejected at that time unless the umpire believes it is appropriate.

NOTE: A warning may be issued to both teams before the start of the game or at any time during the game.

MISSED BASES: Requires an appeal play.

EJECTIONS: Any player, manager, coach or parent ejected from the game or after a game is concluded may carry an additional game suspension to be served at next scheduled game upon discretion of the tournament director and umpire in chief. Ejected managers, coaches or fans must leave the immediate area of the ball fields; they may remain in the parking lot or out of the immediate area from the field. Managers are responsible for the conduct of his players and fans.

Ejection Policy

Head coaches are the only ones allowed to communicate with the umpire if a disagreement arises. If a parent or assistant coach argues calls with the umpire it is grounds for an ejection.

The coach that is at the plate meeting is deemed the manager for the game unless they inform the umpire that they are only standing in for the head coach at that plate meeting. The coach shall point out the manager to the umpire at that time. If a manager is thrown out of the game the assistant head coach shall inform the umpire that they are now acting as manager. If at any time a different manager shows up late to a game they shall, between innings, inform the umpire that they are now acting as the manager. Until they have informed the umpire that they are now the manager, the original manager is still in place.

If a parent or coach is thrown out of a game for any reason, their own player(s) (son or daughter) will also leave the game. The parent or coach will most likely sit out the next game or possibly the tournament depending on the severity of the ejection. Persons ejected could also face suspensions or probation up to one year or life based on what caused the ejection. Verbal abuse and profanity towards officials, tournament staff or anyone has no justification in youth sports. Law enforcement will be notified of any Physical Altercations and will most likely result in charges being filed at our request. If a manager is thrown out of the game his own player(s) may stay in the game.

***MALICIOUS CONTACT:** If the official in charge of the game judges that there has been malicious contact initiated by a player, the offending player will be called out and ejected from the game.

***This includes a player / runner leaving their feet (jumping over) to avoid a tag. If contact is made with the defender, it is at the judgment of the official to rule malicious or not. leaving your feet (jumping over) to avoid a tag will be an automatic out. The ball is immediately dead and all runner (s) will return to the base they last legally occupied at the time the umpire ruled the ball is dead and the runner jumped over the defensive player.**

Player ejections that results in a team having less than 9 players, game will continue if the team has 8 eligible players, however an out will be taken when the ejected player is due to bat in the line-up. Teams falling short of 8 players due to player ejections will forfeit that game.

GATE FEES: Private Parks will have gate fees, Check Park Policies for admission fees.

CONCESSIONS: Will be available at most parks. Teams are expected to carry their own First Aid Kits and Ice (concession stands will not give out these items)

TRASH: Each Team is responsible for cleaning their dugout before they exit the field

COACHES BUCKETS: None allowed outside of the dug outs or on the playing field.

GAME BALLS: 2 new game balls will be provided for every game. Teams will provide one new back-up ball for each game if needed.

FOUL BALLS: The Team at bat shall supply a runner to retrieve any and all foul balls; they shall immediately return them to the home plate umpire.

REFUND POLICIES: In the event of tournament being cancelled by weather or any other unpreventable occurrence, every effort will be made to complete the tournament. Schedules may be changed, games may be shortened, and a 2 day tournament may become a 1 day tournament. All paid teams requesting a refund outside of the 30 day policy will incur a minimum \$25 Administration fee. Refunds pertaining to weather or unpreventable occurrence cancellations will incur a \$25 Administration Fee for a 1 day tournament, \$50 Administration Fee for a 2 day tournament, and \$75 Administration Fee for a 3 day tournament unless funds are applied towards another current season tournament. No Refund if requested inside 30 days prior to an event.

Rainout policy is as follows for 2 game guarantee:

No games played: Full Refund minus admin fee (credits will not have admin fee)

1 game is started: Half Refund

2 games started: No Refunds

Rainout policy is as follows for 3 game guarantee:

No games played: Full Refund minus admin fee (credits will not have admin fee)

1 game is started: Half Refund

2 games started: No Refunds

Rainout policy is as follows for 4 game guarantee:

No games played: Full Refund minus admin fee (credits will not have admin fee)

1 game is started: 2/3 refund

2 game is started: 1/3 refund

3 games started: No Refunds

No gate refunds, nor rain checks, at any time. Tell your players and fans, if play is in doubt due to inclement weather or rain, to wait until play begins to enter park.

FORFEITS: will be scored on our online scheduling system as a forfeit without a score giving the opposite team simply a win but **Teams that have been assigned a forfeit loss will be placed as the lowest seed in their tied-team group. We will try to avoid forfeits from taking place by making schedule changes if advance warning allow us to do so and teams causing a forfeit may be suspended depending on circumstances.

SUSPENDED/COMPLETE GAMES:

6 Inning Game = 3 innings or 2.5 if home team is ahead or 7 Inning Game = 4 innings or 3.5 if home team is ahead will constitute a complete game during inclement weather or light failure. If the 3-4 innings have not been completed, game will resume from when the game was suspended.

7U/8U & UNDER KID PITCH RULES

ALL Rules above apply with slight modifications listed below

Nine (9) defensive players will play in the field.

Balk rules will not apply.

Batters may not advance to first (1st) base on a dropped / missed third (3rd) strike by the catcher.

****Only 5 runs Max per Inning can be scored thru first 3 innings in 7U Only***

- Bunting is allowed
- No lead-offs. Players cannot leave base until after ball crosses home plate.
- Stealing is allowed. Runners may advance once the ball is passed home plate at their own risk. If a player leaves early and is thrown out, he is out. If he is safe, he must return to previous base. 2nd offense by same player in same inning will result in out. If ball is hit, the defensive team has the option of the result of the play or dead ball and runner returns and hitter hits again.
- Stealing home is not allowed. Home plate is dead. Runner on 3rd must be forced home by a walk, HBP, or advance on a hit ball.
- Once the ball is thrown back to the pitcher by the catcher or any fielder at the conclusion of a play, at the umpire's judgment, all base runners must return to their previous base if they are not at least halfway to next base.
- No new inning after 1:30