All USSSA Tournament games played at Baseball Nation will be played in accordance with the current United States Specialty Sports Association Official Baseball National By-Laws & Rules unless special exceptions are noted. This annotated version of the playing rules is provided by Baseball Nation to highlight specific areas with which coaches and umpires should be familiar.

**Coach/Manager Responsibility**

1. Team Insurance, USSSA Roster, Tournament Fee and Gate Fee will be required before first game. **NO EXCEPTIONS** - please check-in at the concession stand 30-minutes before game start.
2. All teams should be ready to present team/player documentation for tournament entry or protest. Example: Player legal name on roster must match birth certificate.
   a Ref: 3.03. A player shall be eligible to compete in the USSSA Baseball program as long as he abides by the USSSA Constitution and the Official Baseball National By-laws & Rules when his first name, last name (no middle names, nick names, shortened names, slang names, initials, prefixes or suffixes are allowed) and date of birth (in proper format – mm/dd/yyyy) are listed EXACTLY as they appear on his original birth certificate, as a member on an eligible team’s Official Online Roster. Failure to comply with this rule shall result in your team being prohibited from participating in USSSA.
3. Head Coach/Manager is responsible for the actions of their team, coaches, players and fans.

**Ready For Play**

1. All teams should be ready to take the field 30 minutes before posted scheduled time.
2. All teams are responsible for quality baseballs for game use.
   a Two (2) new baseballs from each team will be required at start of game.
   b Additional game balls maybe necessary from each team.
3. No infield practice allowed prior to game start.

**Special Safety Rules**

1. No players, coaches, managers, sponsors, and/or spectators may use electronic devices including photograph/video, cell phones, PDA's, iPad's, etc. on the field during live ball.
   a **First Offense:** Warning will be issued.
   b **Second Offense:** Manager will be ejected.
      i **Note:** If devices are determined to be used during live ball for communication between players or coaches, team will forfeit game.
2. **NO SLASHING** for 9U-12U
   a **Slash Bunt:** A play by the team at-bat where the hitter assumes the position for a bunt and then changes grip and takes a swing at the ball. *(Any batter pulling the bat back to a hitting position (changing their grip) after assuming the position for a bunt will be deemed guilty of slash bunting whether the baseball is put into play or not)*
      i **First Offense:** The batter is out, the runners go back to their bases, and the coach/manager is given a warning.
      ii **Second Offense:** The batter is out, the runners go back to their bases, and the coach/manager is ejected.
3. With a runner on 3rd attempting to steal home with the pitch (either on his own or in conjunction with a squeeze bunt), **THE BATTER MUST BUNT OR TAKE THE PITCH**.
   a If the batter swings, the ball will be dead with runners returning to their original bases, the batter will be out, and the coach/manager will be EJECTED. **NO WARNING** will be given in this situation.
4. **7.01.J** Bat / ball boys / girls under the age of eighteen (18) shall not be permitted.

5. **ALL players, coaches, managers, sponsors and spectators** must stay inside the dugout during live ball.
   a. Exception: One (1) on deck player and two (2) offensive coaches in their designated coaching boxes located at first base and third base.

6. Throwing Bats 7U-18U — If batter is determined to throw the bat in a dangerous manner the umpire in his discretion will:
   a. **First Offense**: Issue a team warning.
   b. **Second Offense**: Dead ball, batter is out.

7. **Pitcher Warm-up Area** is live ball territory.
   a. Protective gear during warm-up is required at all times
   b. A coach or player (wearing a helmet) must have a glove and standing near the pitcher to protect him from balls hit in his direction during a live ball.
   c. Live Ball Pro Rule: Any contact with player(s) or coach will be considered a dead ball.
      i. If the umpire, in his sole discretion, deems interference by player or coach in live ball territory the play will result in a dead ball and two bases awarded to the offense.

8. **SMOKING**: Shall be prohibited around all playing areas at the facility.
   a. Please use the parking lot or stay three hundred (300) feet from any playing area where kids are practicing or playing baseball.

9. **No ALCOHOLIC** beverages are allowed.

10. **FIREARMS** are strictly prohibited.

   **IF Medical Emergency — CALL 911 FIRST.** Notify management or umpires.

**Shoes**

1. Shoes with pointed spikes similar to golf or track shoes shall not be worn in any division of play.
   a. In age divisions 7U — 12U non-metal cleats must be worn.
   b. In age divisions 13U — 18U traditional metal baseball spikes may be worn.

**Protective Equipment**

1. The catcher shall wear all appropriate protective gear including:
   a. Catcher's helmet with facemask and either a built in extended throat guard or a separately attached throat guard
   b. Chest protector
   c. Shin and / or leg guards
   d. Protective cup

2. **Note 7.01.G**: In age divisions 4U — 12U
   a. The catcher's helmet shall fully cover both ears.
   b. All offensive players shall use a double ear-flap batting helmet whenever at bat, on deck, on base or any other time outside of the dugout and the ball is live and in play.

Note: If the umpire observes any violation of these rules, he shall direct the violation to be corrected. If the violation is not immediately corrected, in the umpire's judgment, the umpire shall eject the offender from the game.

**Game Preliminaries**

1. **7.02.A**: A flip of a coin between the two teams shall determine the home team for each pool play game.
   a. The highest seeded team will be the home team for bracket play games and championship game.

2. **Time Limits**: Umpires will start the clock at the plate meeting
   a. 7U-8U **All pool games will be 1:15** unless otherwise noted.
      i. 7U-8U **All bracket games will be 1:15** unless otherwise noted.
   b. 9U-14U **All pool games will be 1:30** unless otherwise noted.
      i. 9U-12U **All bracket games will be 1:30** unless otherwise noted.
      ii. 13U-14U **All bracket games will be 1:45** unless otherwise noted.
c. 15U-18U **All pool AND bracket games will be 1:45** unless otherwise noted.
d. **Note:** No inning will start after 7U-8U (1:15Hr), 9U-12U (1:30Hr), 13U-18U (1:45Hr) on Championship Games.

**Slide Rule**

1. Whenever a tag play is evident, a runner must:
   a. **Slide or seek to avoid contact with the fielder and/or catcher.**
   b. Attempting to jump, leap, or dive over the fielder and/or catcher is not interpreted as seeking to avoid contact.
   c. **Malicious contact shall supersede all obstruction penalties.**

2. **Penalty:** The runner shall be called out and may be ejected from the game at the umpire's discretion.
   a. **Note:** When enforcing this rule, the umpire should judge the runner's intent.
      i. If the umpire feels that the contact was unintentional, then the runner should only be declared out.
      ii. If the umpire feels that the contact was intentional and/or malicious, then the runner should be declared out and ejected.

**Conferences**

1. The following rules pertain to the visit of the manager or a coach to the pitcher.
   a. This rule limits the number of visits a manager or a coach may make to any pitcher in any one (1) inning.
   b. A second (2nd) visit to the same pitcher in the same inning will cause this pitcher's automatic removal from the pitching position.

2. **Offense** — one time out per half inning allowed.
3. **Note:** If umpire feels the coach is delaying the game, a called strike will be issued to the batter.

**Balks**

1. **9U-10U:** Pitchers will be allowed some leniency in regards to balks.
   a. Pitchers will be called for all major violations and warned for minor violations that do not affect the outcome of a play.

2. **11U-18U:** Balks will be strictly enforced without warning.
3. **Note:** A Balk is a dead ball.

**Line-ups**

1. Teams may bat
   a. A nine (9) player line-up
   b. Ten (10) player line-up using an Extra Hitter (EH) or
   c. **Continuous line-up of all present, eligible, uniformed players.**
      i. Such line-up must be declared before the start of the game and used the entire game.

2. If a team uses a line-up that contains substitute players
   a. All starting players may be removed and re-enter the game once, but must re-enter in their original position in the batting order
   b. Non-starters are not allowed to re-enter
      i. When a starter re-enters, the player in the starter's batting position in the batting order must be removed from the game and is ineligible for the remainder of the game
      ii. If a team uses a line-up that contains ten (10) players, the player in the Extra Hitter position, while not actually playing a defensive position, will be treated as such for substitution purposes.
   c. If a team uses a continuous line-up, all players other than the nine (9) defensive position players are Extra Hitters and may move freely in defensive positions with the exception of the pitching position.
      i. Any player(s) arriving after the game has begun, shall be added to the bottom of the batting line-up
ii. When using the continuous lineup and a player has to leave the game for any reason, that position in the line-up becomes an out when that at bat comes around.

3. In scholastic divisions 15U-18U
   a. If the Extra Hitter (EH) is not being utilized, then the Designated Hitter (DH) may be utilized in accordance with the NFHS (National Federation of High School Association) baseball rules.
   b. A Designated Hitter may be (not mandatory) selected for any one starting player and all subsequent substitutes for that player in the game.
   c. A starting defensive player cannot be listed as the Designated Hitter in the starting line-up.
      i. A Designated Hitter for said player shall be selected prior to the start of the game, and his name shall be included on the line-up.
   d. Failure to declare a Designated Hitter prior to the game precludes the use of a DH in the game.
   e. If a pinch hitter or pinch runner for the Designated Hitter is used, that player becomes the new DH.
   f. The player who was the Designated Hitter may re-enter pursuant to USSSA Rule 7.02.D.1 (a).
   g. A Designated Hitter and the player for whom the DH is batting are locked into the batting order.
      i. No multiple substitutions may be made that will alter the batting order.
   h. The role of the Designated Hitter is terminated for the remainder of the game when:
      i. The defensive player, or any previous defensive player for whom the Designated Hitter batted, subsequently bats, pinch-hits, or runs for the DH;
      ii. The Designated Hitter or any previous DH assumes a defensive position.

4. Teams may play an official game with an eight (8) player line-up.
   a. If a team plays with an eight (8) player line-up, an out shall be declared for the ninth (9th) position in the batting line-up each turn at bat.
   b. A ninth (9th) player and all subsequent players may be added to the bottom of the batting lineup as soon as they become available.
   c. A team may continue a game with a minimum of eight (8) eligible players.

Position of Fielders
1. When the ball is put in play at the start of, or during a game, all fielders other than the catcher shall be on fair territory.
   a. This means that both feet must be on fair territory.
   b. A foot that is touching a foul line is considered to be in fair territory.
   c. Violation of this rule is not a balk.

2. Penalty: The offensive team will have the choice of taking the result of any play or having the play nullified if it benefited the defense.

Run Rules
1. An imposed Mercy (Run) Rule shall be used to complete a regulation game when one team's margin of lead is greater than or equal to the listed run differential in the corresponding inning.
   a. Six (6) Inning Games: 20 after 1, 15 after 3, 8 after 4
   b. Seven (7) Inning Games: 20 after 1, 15 after 3, 12 after 4, 8 after 5

Intentional Walk
1. An Intentional Walk may be issued upon announcement from the coach, pitcher or catcher.
   a. The four (4) pitches need not be thrown.
2. Note: An Intentional Walk may be issued at any point in the count to the batter.
   a. "Time" will be called by the umpire prior to the award and play will not resume until after the batter has reached first base and umpire issue play.
**Courtesy Runners**

1. At any time, the offensive team may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and catcher of record the previous inning on defense.
   a. The courtesy runner must be a player not presently in the line-up.
      i. If no players not presently in the line-up are available, the courtesy runner shall be the player making the last batted out.

2. **Note:** The re-entry status of the courtesy runner, pitcher, and catcher shall not be affected by this rule.
   a. If at any time, a courtesy runner is determined to be ineligible, a proper replacement pursuant to these rules (if available) will be used without penalty.

**Sportsmanship & Ejections**

1. All players, coaches, managers, sponsors and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times.
   a. Any player, coach, manager, sponsor or spectator whose conduct is unbecoming or abusive shall at a minimum be reprimanded with a warning.
   b. If warranted, the offending party shall be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Umpires and/or the Tournament Director.
   c. Any player, coach, manager, sponsor or spectator leaving their position or base, in the field, on the bench, in the dugout area or grandstands to participate in a fight, brawl or altercation shall be immediately ejected from the game and may be disbarred/suspended pursuant to USSSA Rule 14.02.
   d. Any coach, manager, sponsor or spectator ejected from a game shall immediately remove himself from the vicinity of the playing field and/or grandstands for the remainder of the game.
   e. Additional penalties may be assessed at the discretion of the Tournament Director.
   f. Any player ejected from a game shall either immediately be confined to the dugout area or asked to leave the park for the remainder of the game.
   g. All persons ejected may be asked to leave the park and/or venue at the discretion of the Tournament Director.
   h. Abusive language or cursing shall not be tolerated under any circumstances and shall result in an automatic ejection.
   i. Throwing of equipment shall result in an automatic ejection.
   j. If necessary, a team may be forced to forfeit a game and/or be removed from the tournament.
   k. As these rules indicate, the matter of disorderly conduct shall be taken seriously.
   l. The tournaments your team will be participating in will include some of the finest baseball teams in the world.
   m. The level of competition will be high and at times fierce. Because of this, please remind all players, coaches, managers, sponsors and spectators to be extra aware of good sportsmanship.

**Protest**

1. Umpires will work to settle all situations on the field.
   a. Protests will be allowed for age and pitching violations or rule interpretations only.
   b. Protests must be declared to the Umpire-in-Chief and then to the League/Tournament Director before the next pitch following the dispute.
   c. If a call to be protested is the last recorded out of a game or on a game ending play, the protest **MUST** be filed prior to the umpires and the protesting team leaving the field of play.
   d. No protest will be allowed following the game.
   e. League/Tournament officials will rule on all protests and their decisions shall be final.
   f. The Protest fee is **$100.00 cash**. The fee shall be returned only if the protest is upheld.