

2024 RULES FOR NCSSA SOFTBALL TOURNAMENTS

NCSSA Rules Supersede SSUSA Rules Rule Changes for 2024 are printed in RED

Jan. 15, 2024

1. The NCSSA has adopted the SSUSA rule on the mandatory wearing of approved face guards by the pitcher. The NCSSA has also adopted a rule stating that the pitcher must wear some sort of shin guards.
2. The defensive line-up must consist of no more than 10 players except teams 65 or older who may have 11, and 85 or older may have 12. If 65 and older teams have to play younger teams they may still use their extra player(s) on defense. A minimum of eight defensive players must be available to start a game. If other players arrive they must be put at the bottom of the batting order and can only bring the team up to 10 players for 60 and younger teams, 11 players for 65 and over teams, 12 players for 85 and over teams, and 12 players for Group 11 and Group 12 teams.
3. The home team will be determined before each game by a toss of a coin between team representatives. There are no exceptions to this rule. A 62 minute game clock begins at the conclusion of the coin toss.
4. Five team brackets: All games will be played as regulation games and teams who are scheduled to play each other twice will receive either 1/2 of a win or 1/2 of a loss for each game played.
5. A committee composed of the tournament director or his assistants and the game umpire will make the final decision on protests. Protests must be made to the umpire immediately following the questioned decision or ruling and before play resumes.
6. A team should not be scheduled for more than three games per day, no more than two back to back games, and not under lights for 60 or over divisions. Travel distance to schedule bracketing for tournaments will be determined by the team zip code as it calculated on the NCSSA website. The current NCSSA recommended schedule/ bracketing format shall be used.
7. A team should play a minimum of five games per tournament. (If less, Tournament Director should note it on the flyer.) All games must be played. A team that plays forfeited games will still be able to win the tournament. No team may refuse to play an opponent but may play any game under protest. Unless mutually agreed upon by both managers, a team that does not play all its games will not be eligible for any prize and will pay a fine of \$75 per game not played to NCSSA and subject to rules 12 and 17. The fine will be awarded to the team (s) involved. Teams are encouraged to recruit players and continue as an exhibition team. Teams who are denied games because their opponent withdraws must request any rebate or compensation in writing to the NCSSA Board.
8. Tournament directors will have a cut-off date at least ten days prior to the start of their tournament. Brackets must be approved by their Primary Region Representative. If the Tournament Director is the Primary Region Representative, his brackets must be approved by the NCSSA Tournament Liaison Officer. Game schedules must be out at least seven days in advance. Entry fees and the NCSSA approved rosters must be in by the cut-off date. The most recent NCSSA roster is the official roster for that tournament. Tournament Directors are allowed to make adjustments to bring parity to a bracket.
9. NCSSA rosters are limited to 22 players. All NCSSA players are allowed to be on two permanent team rosters but they must be of the same age or older than their roster age group. 75+ teams may roster up to five players aged 74. 80+ teams may roster up to seven underage players aged 78 and 79, with not more than three being age 78. The 75 team members that are under the team's age, must be on the teams permanent roster. 80 year old teams may add players age 78 and 79 to their roster for a given tournament, not to exceed the limit of underage players allowed. Any 80 or over team that is ranked in the bottom two groups, may use 12 defensive players in NCSSA play. Any team may add two temporary players for a tournament but they must be of the same age or older than their roster age group. **Group 11, 12 and 13 teams may add up to five temporary players for a tournament, but they must be of the same age or older than their roster age group.**

SSUSA has now allowed 70 teams to have 3 69 year olds on their roster. This SSUSA rule change came out after the NCSSA General Membership meeting in December 2023 and could not be voted on. The Board of Directors of the NCSSA voted on this at their Jan. 2024 meeting, and voted to not change the 70 year old teams roster makeup. At the NCSSA General Membership Meeting in Dec. 2024, the managers will have the opportunity to change the NCSSA roster rules to match SSUSA, or to continue as is.

10. A team's permanent roster is frozen at the beginning of their first game. Any team adding three or more players to its latest approved NCSSA roster will not be eligible for awards and the games will not count in the standings and recorded as exhibition only. Player (s) added must be on the team's submitted roster prior to their first game. Managers must declare to the Tournament Director if he has add-ons, who the add-ons are and if his team is playing games as exhibition. Any team failing to declare as exhibition when playing with an illegal roster for any given tournament will pay a fine equal to the cost of the tournament, payable to the NCSSA, and be subject to Rule 18.
11. All players are restricted to one roster during a tournament. A player who plays on two teams will cause the second team to forfeit any games he plays in. The first team he plays for becomes his only team for that tournament. Exception - At the NCSSA Hall of Fame Tournament, a player who is on two permanent team rosters may play for both teams providing that one team plays on Thurs-Fri, and the other on Sat-Sun.
12. If a team drops out of the tournament after the cut-off date, it will lose its entry fee. Any team dropping out of a tournament after the schedule is out will automatically be suspended commencing 15 days after that date until the Board can review the problem and/or enact penalty or reinstatement.
13. Fees: Team registration of \$75 along with the NCSSA approved roster must be in before a team can play. Team fee includes insurance and team registration for current season to Senior Softball USA. Tournament directors must send \$150 to NCSSA per tournament to register and for insurance before their scheduled tournament date (s).
14. One up home run rule: A team cannot have more than one home run (untouched ball hit over the fence) than its opponent. All subsequent home runs (untouched balls hit over the fence) will be counted as a walk, and base runners may only advance one base if forced. Homeruns hit over the fence and Four Base Awards, are walk offs for the batter & base runner (s). Runners don't have to touch any bases. The home team may go 1 up in home runs in the bottom of the last inning.
15. There will be no penalty on a batter who leaves the game with an injury or for an emergency. No out will be assessed. A substitute will take that spot in the lineup. If no substitute is available, that spot in the lineup will be deleted. The player leaving the game may not re-enter that game.
16. Tie breakers in any bracket at the end of a tournament will be resolved in the following manner:
 1. WON/LOSS record.
 2. HEAD TO HEAD competition.
 3. LEAST RUNS SCORED AGAINST.*
 4. RUN DIFFERENTIAL
 5. Least runs allowed in tournament between all teams.
In a 5 team bracket, only the first five games played count in this tie breaker.

Only the scores of the teams involved in the tie will be considered in calculating 3 and 4 above. Once a team is eliminated from the tie, It cannot be brought back into the tie consideration.

* If a team has a forfeit, then the game with the least runs scored will be removed from the equation of all affected teams. SS-USA rule 13.6
17. Unsportsmanlike conduct. SSUSA Section 16 Disqualification Rule 16.6
18. Discipline: Any violations of these rules will be reviewed by the board and the appropriate punishment shall be administered.
19. The Flip-Flop rule is amended to be mandatory in any tournament game when the Visitor is ahead by 10 runs or more at the commencement of the "open inning". Once a visiting team is ahead by 15 or more runs in the open inning, the teams flip flop, even though the visiting team has not completed their at-bat. The number of outs (if any) and the location of any runners is recorded, and the home team comes to bat. If the home team scores less than 15 runs, the game is over. If the home team takes the lead, the visiting team is allowed to continue their at-bats where they left off, prior to the flip flop.

20. The courtesy runner rule from the SSUSA was adopted for NCSSA play. For 2018 SSUSA and NCSSA has amended this rule to say, "a courtesy runner may only enter prior to the first pitch to any batter." For 2024 SSUSA and NCSSA has amended this rule to say, "when a batter is walked, a courtesy runner can take first base without the batter-baserunner touching first. The batter can go directly to the dugout".
21. The distance between bases will be 65 or 70 feet, with a commitment line 30 feet from home plate.
22. When different groups must be combined in a single bracket, the following be followed.
 - 2 groups . . . 3 runs awarded at the beginning of the game to the lowest rated team(s).
 - 3 groups . . . 5 runs awarded at the beginning of the game to the lowest rated team(s).
 - 4 groups . . . 7 runs awarded at the beginning of the game to the lowest rated team(s).
23. After a team has played a minimum of four NCSSA tournaments, and has won more than 50% of tournaments entered, that team shall give up an additional 5 runs, over and above any run equalizers, to every team within their tournament bracket, until the percent of won tournaments falls to 50% or below. These runs will be given at 1 run per inning, starting with the second inning.
24. Lineup cards will be required at all NCSSA tournaments.
25. First basemen gloves or mitts are legal in NCSSA play for all defensive players.
26. The official softball to be used at all NCSSA tournaments will be the Baden Fire, .44/375 softball, or the Trump .44/375 Micro Cell Technology ball, or the Demarini GSL .44/400 softball.
27. Sun Affecting Batters Rule. This rule has been eliminated from SSUSA. NCSSA has voted to keep it in the NCSSA. The rule states, If the sun is affecting the batter's ability 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, at the side chosen by the batter as the only remedy. The request, if granted, shall be applied on a full-inning basis only.
28. NCSSA emphasis is on Rule 3.8 of the SSUSA Rulebook, "Wearing of Jerseys with individual numbers".
29. All Groups in NCSSA will play with the 1-1 count.
30. Teams are not allowed to use pitching screens during tournament games.

Edited by the NCSSA Rulebook Committee