

**USA SOFTBALL OF MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH FAST-PITCH
LOCAL TOURNAMENT SANCTION PROCEDURES & POLICIES**

TOURNAMENT INFO:

USA Softball MA. will only sanction tournaments hosted by travel teams and leagues that are currently registered with USA Softball MA. The sanction fee for USA Softball MA. registered leagues will be \$75 per age division, payable via check, money order or paid via PayPal. The sanction fee for USA Softball MA. registered travel teams will be \$150 per age division, payable via check, money order or paid via PayPal. All local tournament sanction forms must be completed and submitted with payment to the Deputy State JO Commissioner by February 1. No entries will be accepted after this date.

Local tournament sanction forms will be submitted by the Deputy State JO Commissioner to the appropriate USA Softball Area Commissioner for review and approval. Each Area Commissioner will have a meeting in which all tournament dates for that area will be determined to avoid conflicts. Note cashing of a check or PayPal approval does not constitute approval of the tournament. If a tournament is not approved and no alternate date can be selected, a full refund will be issued.

The tournament will be listed on the [USA Softball of New England](#) website. Teams will register via this website and will send payment to the tournament director. **Tournament directors will approve all teams entering the tournament after verifying teams have submitted background checks, SafeSport, rosters, and insurance to USA Softball MA. USA Softball MA. reserves the right to reject/deny a team from your tournament for failing to provide these documents to USA Softball MA.**

TOURNAMENT CLASSIFICATIONS:

Open tournaments can accept all classified teams (A, B or C).

Class B tournaments can accept ONLY Class B or Class C teams. No Class A teams allowed.

Class C tournaments can accept ONLY Class C teams. No Class A or B teams allowed.

Tournament directors are NOT allowed to classify teams. Classification of teams is decided by USA Softball of the state the team is registered in and cannot be changed by the tournament director or USA Softball MA.

TOURNAMENT DATE RESTRICTIONS:

Open tournaments CANNOT be held on the same weekend as ANY USA Softball MA. Class A Championship Play Event (States, Regionals, or Nationals). They may be held on the same weekend as USA Softball MA. Class B or Class C Championship Play Events as long as that Area or adjacent Area is not hosting a Class B or Class C Championship Play Event. The State USA Softball MA. Commissioner or Deputy State JO Commissioner may supersede this.

Class B tournaments CANNOT be held on the same weekend as ANY USA Softball MA. Class B Championship Play Event (States, Regionals, or Nationals). They may be held on the same weekend as USA Softball MA. Class A or Class C Championship Play Events as long as that Area or adjacent Area is not hosting a Class A or Class C Championship Play Event. The State USA Softball MA. Commissioner or Deputy State JO Commissioner may supersede this.

Class C tournaments CANNOT be held on the same weekend as ANY USA Softball MA. Class C Championship Play Event (States, Regionals, or Nationals). The State USA Softball MA. Commissioner or Deputy State JO Commissioner may supersede this.

Tournaments that have been approved to hold a local USA Softball tournament during the same weekend as a USA Softball Championship event MUST refund a team's entry fee in full if they give a two weeks notice to the tournament director that they are dropping out in order to play in a USA Softball Championship Play Event. Teams must furnish tournament director proof of entry and final standings from the USA Softball Championship Play Event prior to receiving a refund.

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR ACCEPTING OF TEAMS:

All teams will automatically be placed in "Pending" status after registering for a tournament on the USA Softball of Ma tournament website (www.usasoftballma.com). Here are the following steps tournament directors will follow when accepting a team into a tournament,

1. Accepted (Pending ASA Reg): Tournament directors will move the team from "Pending" to "Accepted (Pending ASA Reg)". Tournament directors will need to verify a team has been approved by USA Softball of Ma before moving the team to any other status regardless if payment has been received. Here are the steps to verify the team is registered with USA Softball of Ma.
 - a. Go to www.usasoftballma.com
 - b. Select JO/Youth webpage from the menu options;
 - c. Select Registered Teams and verify the team registered for your tournament is on this page.
2. Accepted (Awaiting payment): The team has been approved by USA Softball of Ma and needs to submit their payment for the tournament.
3. Accepted (Deposit only): The team has submitted a deposit and been accepted to the tournament.
4. Accepted (Paid in Full): The team is registered with USA Softball of Ma and paid in full.

TOURNAMENT REFUND POLICY:

Should a team have to drop out of a tournament AND a replacement team has been found, the team shall be entitled to a refund minus the \$100 non-refundable deposit. If a replacement team is unable to be found, no refund will be returned.

Teams dropping out once a schedule has been released, will not be entitled to a refund, even if a replacement team is found. Please note that the team dropping out may be subject to additional penalties as determined by USA Softball of MA.

TOURNAMENT WEATHER RELATED REFUND POLICY:

Should a tournament have to shorten the number of games played, teams will be refunded based on the following formula:

If a team plays zero games, the team will be entitled to their entry fee less non-recoverable tournament expenses. These include, but not limited to, perishable food, T-shirts, trophies, & tournament insurance. Tournament directors will provide USA Softball of Ma this calculation within 7 days of the tournament for approval. Once approved, the tournament MUST send each team a copy of this calculation along with their refund.

If a team plays one game, the team will be entitled to 50% of their entry fee.

If a team plays two or more games, there will be no refund given.

Tournaments MUST refund teams within 14 days from when the tournament was scheduled.

TEAM ELIGIBILITY:

Only USA Softball registered teams are eligible to participate. A list of currently registered Massachusetts teams is available on the www.usasoftballma.com website under registrations.

For out of state teams, tournament directors MUST contact USA Softball of Ma to ensure those teams are registered with their state USA Softball association. This is to ensure your insurance as well as the umpire's insurance is in effect for your tournament.

TEAM ROSTER & INSURANCE INFORMATION:

Teams must complete a USA Softball roster, have it signed by a USA Softball official (a live signature and not one pre-printed on roster), and have it available to the tournament director at all times. Teams must also have insurance binders and birth certificates available to the tournament director. USA Softball of Ma reserves the right to reject a team from your tournament for failing to provide these documents.

It is highly recommended that a team e-mail the binder to the tournament director before the start of the tournament. **All adult bench personnel need to have a USA Softball National Background Check & SafeSport Certification completed to be allowed on the field.** Coaches must have either the background check card or profile from RegisterUSASoftball.com available on their person at all time throughout the tournament.

TEAM PAYMENTS:

Teams must make a minimum \$100 non-refundable deposit to the tournament within 14 days of the on-line entry or the team will be removed. Final payments are due no later than 4 weeks prior to the start of the tournament unless the tournament has an earlier deadline. Teams that do not make final payment will be removed from the tournament with no refund of fees paid unless prior arrangements have been made with the tournament director. This rule is not in effect for showcase events.

USA SOFTBALL UMPIRES:

USA Softball registered umpires MUST be used. The “tournament director” must contact the local USA Softball Commissioner in order to coordinate the scheduling of umpires. Umpires should be scheduled at a minimum of three weeks prior to the start of the tournament. USA Softball of Massachusetts sets the minimum number of umpires as follows:

8U

1 umpire for pool play games. 1 umpire for all single and double elimination games including finals

10U & 10C

1 umpire for pool play games.

1 umpires for single elimination games. Recommended 2 umpires for finals

1 umpire for double elimination games except 2 umpires for winner/loser bracket finals, championship & if games

12A/B/C

1 umpire for pool play games.

2 umpires for single elimination games including finals

1 umpire for double elimination games except 2 umpires for winner/loser bracket finals, championship & if games

14A/B/C

2 umpires for pool play games.

2 umpires for single elimination games including finals

2 umpires for double elimination games including winner/loser bracket finals, championship & if games

16U/18U

2 umpires for pool play games.

2 umpires for single elimination games including finals

2 umpires for double elimination games including winner/loser bracket finals, championship & if games

TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS, AFTER CONSULTING WITH THE LOCAL ASSIGNOR/UIC, IF THEY DECIDE TO CHANGE THE RECOMMENDED MINIMUM NUMBER OF UMPIRES, THIS MUST BE NOTED IN THE TOURNAMENT RULES, ON THE USASOFTBALLNE.COM WEBSITE AND IN ALL OTHER COMMUNICATIONS THE TOURNAMENT HAS WITH THE TEAMS.

POOL PLAY & BRACKETS:

Tournaments MUST send out schedules to all teams a minimum of 3 weeks prior to its start. This schedule MUST also be sent to the umpire assignor a minimum of 3 weeks before its start.

Tournaments must send out single elimination seeded brackets with teams' pool play schedules. Tournament directors will also inform teams how they will receive their single elimination schedules once pool play has been completed. **Tournament directors are prohibited from hosting tournaments where brackets are not made available prior to the start of the tournament.** Exceptions are made for weather related schedule changes.

Single elimination seeded brackets will be set using the following:

1. Rank teams by winning percentage in their pool
2. If two teams are tied, compare head to head win-loss. If more than 2 teams are tied, skip this step
3. If teams are tied, rank based on fewest runs allowed per game
4. If teams are tied, rank based on most runs scored per game
5. If teams are tied, a coin toss is used

Tournament directors are required to submit to USA Softball of MA. their final pool play results and bracket play within 7 days of conclusion of their tournament. This can be done via email with an Excel spreadsheet or by emailing a link to your tournament standings website. This will be used by USA Softball MA. to determine if teams need to be reclassified.

**USA SOFTBALL MA. LOCAL TOURNAMENT
REQUIRED RULES (ALL CLASSIFICATIONS)**

The following rules are required to be sanctioned by USA Softball MA. All tournament rules MUST be given to the team upon acceptance into the tournament.

TIME LIMIT: There are two (2) time limit format approved by USA Softball of Massachusetts

1. A minimum time limit of 1 hour 30 minutes. THE TIME LIMIT CANNOT BE A DROP DEAD TIME. Once an inning begins and time expires, the inning must be completed per USA Softball rules. Exceptions to this rule will be allowed in cases of inclement weather or in cases of scrimmages and showcase format tournaments. Any changes to time limits MUST be communicated to the teams prior to the change going into effect.

OR

2. Game time will be 1 hour 20 minutes and finish the inning. Then play one additional inning or half inning if the home team is ahead. For Pool Play games if teams play all 7 innings and the 1 hour 20 minute time limit hasn't been reached, the next inning and the one additional inning will be played with the Tie Breaker Rule. If the score is tied after the additional inning the game will be considered over. For Elimination games, if after the additional inning the game is tied, the Tie Breaker rule will be used until a team is declared the winner. Exceptions to this rule will be allowed in cases of inclement weather or in cases of scrimmages and showcase format tournaments.

TEAM LINE UPS:

Pool Play Games - The following batting line-ups are allowed.

- Straight 9 and/or DP/Flex - Teams may bat 9 players with or without the DP/Flex.
- Continuous Order - When batting **"up to"** all roster players, any additional batter(s) shall be listed as an EP and may be listed anywhere in the batting order and may play defense as any position.
 - Example - A team may choose to bat 11 players and list one additional player as a substitute. A team is NOT required to bat all 12 players.

Elimination Games -

- Teams may use "straight 9" or DP/Flex. Both lines may use only one EP in their lineup (a max batting order of 10 players).

Teams that bat everyone in their line-up will take an out if a player is removed for any reason other than an ejection. Teams will not be allowed courtesy runners, pinch runners or pinch hitters when batting everyone. If a player is ejected when batting everyone, the game will be forfeited.

METAL CLEATS:

Metal cleats are not allowed for 12U divisions and lower. The tournament can prohibit metal cleats in older divisions BUT must make it clear in the tournament rules

COACH CONDUCT:

Coaches that are ejected from a tournament game WILL be prohibited from coaching their team's next game. Depending on the circumstances of the ejection, a coach may be suspended for the remainder of the tournament and may also require a disciplinary hearing with USA Softball MA.

HOME TEAM:

Home team will be determined by a coin flip during pool play games. During elimination play, the home team will be determined by higher seed having choice. Should both teams be the same seed, a coin flip will be used.

TIE GAMES (See Rule 5, Section 11.):

During pool play, games may end in a tie even with time remaining. During elimination play, games that are tied after 7 innings or after time has expired will go into the USA Softball tie-breaker rule.

RUN AHEAD RULE – (See Rule 5, Section 9 A.1.B)

Game will be complete if a team is ahead by the following runs: 15 runs after 3 innings, 12 runs after 4 innings, & 8 runs after 5 innings. The run ahead rule will be in-effect for both pool and elimination games.

At no time should tournament directors add additional rules without the approval of USA Softball of Massachusetts.

**USA SOFTBALL MA. LOCAL TOURNAMENT
REQUIRED RULES (CLASS 10C, 12C & 14C)**

These rules are exclusively for 10C, 12C & 14C tournaments and are in addition to the required rules above:

RUN RULE (POOL PLAY):

There will be a maximum of 5 runs scored per inning, except on a home run OVER the fence in which a team will be allowed to score more than the maximum number of runs (all runs count).

There are **NO UNLIMITED RUNS** in the final inning as the score can end in a tie.

RUN RULE (ELIMINATION PLAY):

There will be a maximum of 5 runs scored per inning, except on a home run OVER the fence in which a team will be allowed to score more than the maximum number of runs (all runs count).

The final inning will be unlimited runs.

The final inning will be declared once there is 10 minutes or less in the 90 minute time limit.

Should the final inning end before the time limit is reached, the game is over unless tied. If tied, the USA Softball tiebreaker rule will be used to determine a winner.

NO INFIELD FLY (10C DIVISION ONLY)

The infield fly rule will NOT be in effect for 10C tournaments.

DROPPED THIRD STRIKE (10C DIVISION ONLY):

A batter may not advance on a called or swinging strike three that the catcher drops. Base runners are allowed to advance.

At no time should tournament directors add additional rules without the approval of USA Softball of Massachusetts.

**USA SOFTBALL MA. LOCAL TOURNAMENT
SANCTION INSTRUCTIONS**

- Name of Tournament:** Name that will be posted on USASoftballNE.com website
- Sponsoring Organization:** Only USA Softball registered organizations can sanction and post tournaments on USASoftballNE.com
- Contact Person:** Contact name and address info for the tournament director/
liaison to USA Softball MA. for event
- Tournament Dates:** List dates for event cannot conflict with other events at same age and classification on the same weekend in the same area. Also cannot conflict with any USA Softball Championship Play event and pool play games can not start on Thursday.
- Age/ Classification:** Select age and classification for event. Teams MUST be this classification or lower to play in this event. For example, a 12U event can have 12A, 12B or 12C teams playing. A 12C event can only have 12C teams.
- Type of Tournament:** Select Invitational if you will select which teams that register will be playing in your event. Select Open if all teams that register will be allowed to play in your event.
- Format for Tournament:** Examples include:

3 pool play/ single elimination
4 game round robin
2 pool play/ double elimination
- Person Assigning Umpires:** Must be an approved assignor from the State Commissioner for insurance to be in effect for umpires and teams.
- Number of Umpires per game:** Must adhere to requirements based on age and classification listed in the USA Softball MA. sanction procedures.
- Maximum Number of Teams:** Tournaments cannot have more than 4 teams per field without lights or no more than 6 teams per field with lights
- Will UIC be on-site:** Tournaments are highly recommended to have a UIC on-site to handle any protests or umpire issues throughout your tournament. The UIC will not umpire games unless in an emergency. Please contact the assigner for UIC fees.