

Tournament Team Guidelines

Check In: Each team must check in before their first game. Please have your *2024 USA Softball Roster* (proof of insurance), and player birth certificates available for review if asked to provide by a tournament or game official. Coaches should always have their USA Softball ID's, as proof of current background check, visible during the weekend.

Only coaches listed on your official roster that have completed SafeSport Training and USA Softball National Background Checks will be permitted in the dugouts or on the field. If a coach is not listed on your signed official roster they will not be permitted to be on the bench or the field .

Conduct: EACH HEAD COACH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR TEAMS BEHAVIOR INCLUDING, PARENTS AND SPECTATORS. HECKLING UMPIRES OR OPPONENTS, AND/OR NOT ADHERING TO THE FACILITY RULES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. Coaches, parents and fans should set the tone as role models. Unruly or abusive conduct will not be tolerated. We will be forced to ask spectators who do not follow the facility guidelines to leave and/or to eject unruly fans with the risk of forfeiting the offending team.

Schedule: Please adhere to your scheduled game times and field guidelines. Please arrive *at least* 20 minutes before your scheduled time. If possible, game times may be bumped up due to games shortened by run rule, or weather concerns. **Please be ready to go on shorter notice if need be. Teams may use the little league field for warm ups. Please share the space if other teams are trying to warm up. Warming up on the common areas is strictly forbidden for safety reasons.**

Game Balls: To ensure player safety and fairness, please do not put your own balls into games unless approved of by the home plate umpire. Anyone retrieving game balls from out of play should return them to the umpire or a coach. As you all know, Game Balls are a hefty expense. Tournament game balls are property of Execution Fastpitch.

Game Rules/Format

USA Softball Rules will be in effect except where noted hereafter.

Pool Play Games - Double Coin Flip decides home team. Heads/Tails for the call etc...

Elimination Games - Higher seed is the home team. ***In the finals the higher seed may opt to defer home field. This option should be given at the pre-game conference with coaches and umpires.***

- The Home Team is the official scorer
- ***Please limit between inning warm up pitches to 3. We want to keep the games moving and get as deep into games as possible. We play softball, not the clock!***
- Each team is responsible for their own first aid needs and cleaning their dugout of trash after games.
- Both age divisions will have 2 umpires for all games
 - *The Umpire in Chief reserves the right to change this alignment if there is a shortage of umpires available during this tournament,*
- ***No metal cleats are allowed on any asphalt paved or decked areas*** in the complex. During game play metal cleats are allowed.
- An email reminder will be sent to check the bracket for game times and locations for Sunday's games. Once again all games will be posted on the www.itournamentbrackets.com site. Tournament directors may post a board on site at the Snack Shack with bracket updates as well.

The Tournament Directors reserve the right to change the location, opponent and times of games based on weather and/or field conditions. The Tournament Directors may also change the game time limits due to weather if necessary to ensure equal pool games.

Team Requirements

As noted, all teams are required to have 2024 USA Softball of MA approved rosters, verification of insurance and birth certificates. Coaches should have their current USA Softball coaching card available and be on the official approved roster. Teams are required to have these items in their possession at all games, available for inspection, at any time.

Team Warm Ups

Please use the little league baseball field for team warmups. Please be respectful and share the field for warmups with other teams as needed. **PLEASE DO NOT DIRECT ANY HITTING TOWARDS THE LIVE GAME FIELDS OR SPECTATOR AREAS.**

Pre-Game Infield Practice

Infield or batting practice is NOT allowed on game infields between games. Please keep the practice in the outfield grass to give workers time and safety to prepare the playing surface. PLEASE, NO HITTING INTO ANY FENCES.

Time Limit

Game time will be 1 hour 30 minutes and finish the inning.

Pool play games may end in a tie after time has expired. For elimination games, USA Softball Tie Breaker rule will be used until a team is declared the winner. Exceptions may be allowed in cases of inclement weather.

- Time limits are in effect through the quarterfinals. The Semi-finals and Final are not timed.
- Time begins as soon as the first warm up pitch has been thrown, after coaches and umpires meet at home plate pre-game.
- The Umpire's clock is the official clock. Any others (such as a scoreboard or coaches' clock) are unofficial. The official game clock will start once the first warmup pitch is thrown after the pre-game conference between the umpires and coaches.

Shorthanded Rule

Teams may start a game with 8 players. The 9th spot in the batting order will be left vacant and an out will be recorded each time the empty spot is due up to bat. If a rostered player arrives, they must immediately enter the game following Rule 4-1-D2.b

If a team starts with 8 and loses a player for any reason whether injury or ejection and is left with only 7 players, the shorthanded team will forfeit.

Lineups/Ejections

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/Bracket 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.

Forfeits

Forfeits are a last resort. Forfeit scores are recorded as 7-0 for seeding purposes.

Run Ahead Rule

We use a modified Run Ahead Rule: 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, & 8 runs after 5 innings. The run ahead rule will be in-effect for both pool and elimination games.

- Tie Games: During pool play, games may end in a tie even with time remaining. During pool play however, if a game is tied after 7 innings and the time limit has not expired, the game will continue with Rule 5-11 in effect starting with the 8th inning and until the time limit has been reached. If the teams are still tied at the conclusion of the last completed inning and the time limit has expired, the game is scored as a tie.
- During elimination play, games that are tied after 7 innings or after time has expired will follow Rule 5-11 until the game is won.

Courtesy Runners

Pool Play:

Coaches may agree to use courtesy runners at pre game conference. Initial courtesy runners should be from substitutes on the bench, if none are available courtesy runners should be the last recorded out.

Bracket Play:

We follow USA Softball rules for pinch runners. **No available substitutions equate to no courtesy runners. Coaches are encouraged to warm up their pitchers if catchers were on base or at bat and are getting their gear on between innings.**

Bracket Seeding

Seeding will be based on the following:

Win/Loss/Tie record within the division. (total Points)

2-points will be awarded for a win; 1-point will be awarded for a tie; 0-points will be awarded for a loss.

In the event of 2 teams being tied with the same win/loss/tie record, the following tiebreaker rules apply:

- Head-to-Head Competition (only if 2 teams are tied and have played each other)
- Least Runs Allowed
- If still tied after least runs allowed, a coin flip will occur

In the event of 3 or more teams being tied with the same win/loss/tie record, the following tiebreaker rules

apply:

- Least Runs Allowed
- If still tied after least runs allowed, a coin flip will occur

If a team forfeits a game, the Tournament Director may choose to drop them in the seeding.

THE TIE BREAKING PROCESS DOES NOT REWARD TEAMS FOR RUNNING THE SCORE UP, DEFENSE IS REWARDED OVER OFFENSE.

Disputes/Protests

The Umpire-In-Chief and/or Tournament Director will settle disputes pertaining to these tournament guidelines.

Please note, only a misinterpretation of a playing rule can be protested, judgment calls cannot. Before an official protest, a coach needs to be sure that they know the rule that they are protesting.

If there is an official protest of a *misinterpretation of a playing rule*, do the following:

1) Before the next pitch is thrown, notify the home plate umpire that you wish to protest

2) Do not continue the game until the protest has been ruled on by either the tournament U.I.C; the tournament director, or both.

No protests will be accepted after the game.

Friendly reminder, the clock keeps running during a protest/dispute.

Rain/Inclement Weather Policy

Pool Play:

- If a game is interrupted by rain at the **end of an inning**, and the time limit has expired, the game will be declared complete.
- If a game is interrupted by rain during an inning, and the time limit has expired during the delay, the score shall revert to the previously completed inning.

Games subsequent to the delay will remain at seven innings and the 1 hour and 30-minute time limit, unless in the tournament director's opinion, all subsequent games should be shortened to keep the schedule on track. The above rule can be applied to any portion of the tournament at the Tournament Directors discretion. If the tournament is back on schedule the games will return to 7 innings and the 1 hour and 30-minute time limit. Pool Play games will be considered complete after 1 complete inning. Games that do not make 1 complete inning will recorded a 0-0 tie for seeding purposes.

Execution Fastpitch reserves the right to rearrange field assignments to another local field or time.

Bracket Play (Sunday):

- If the rain occurs on Sunday and it is impossible to complete the tournament, the Champion will be the highest seed remaining.
- If the tournament is declared over due to weather or field conditions being deemed unplayable during the Championship game, the score of the last COMPLETED inning will be used to determine the Champion, starting with the last completed inning and rolling back each inning until one team was ahead at the end of that inning. If all rolled back innings were tied the result will be Co-Champions for that age division.

The objective of the rain policy is to be fair to all participants and give everyone the same amount of games. Every effort will be made to be fair to everyone. However, there may be unforeseen and complicated circumstances that make a totally acceptable conclusion impossible to obtain.

Trophy Ceremony

Trophy ceremony immediately follows the Championship game on-field or in a designated area.

These rules are meant to be all inclusive but if an issue arises that is not laid out it will be up to the Tournament Director, in coordination with the UIC, to make the final call.