



## Tournament

# Playing Rules & Guidelines

2/7/2025

*United States Adult Baseball (USAB) uses the Official Rules of Baseball as its base, with the following adaptations.*

### **1.0 Rule addendums**

1.01 Decoy tags: Decoy tags, inducing a runner to slide unnecessarily, are prohibited. An offending player is subject to potential ejection, with the runner awarded at least one base or as many bases as he would have made without the obstruction. There will be no warnings.

1.02 Hit Batters: Any pitcher who hits four (4) batters with pitches during a game must be removed from the pitching position (upon hitting his fourth batter). He may continue to play offense and defense.

1.03 Umpires are instructed to not grant first base to a hitter who makes no attempt to get out of the way of a pitch or leans into a pitch to get hit. The umpire's decision is based on his judgment, and a ball (or strike) will be called.

## **2.0 Player Safety**

2.01 Runners should avoid collisions with defensive players fielding a batted ball (fielders are entitled to the ball, which includes a step-and-reach beyond the point of contact with the ball, until such time as the ball passes a fielder with a chance to field it).

2.02 Any player – offensive or defensive – who initiates intentional and/or malicious contact with an opponent shall be called out, if applicable, and be subject to ejection.

2.03 Illegal slides will result in the sliding player being called out and being subject to ejection.

2.03a A legal slide is directly to the base on a straight line from the previous base. A slide may go past the base if it is not in the direction of (or makes contact with) the defensive player handling the baseball; any runner who deliberately slides into a defensive player away from a base is out and subject to both an interference call and ejection if contact deemed malicious.

2.03b An illegal slide is described as:

2.03b.1 barrel-rolling

2.03b.2 body blocking

2.03b.3 sliding with such momentum that it takes the sliding player into a fielder beyond the base.

2.03b.4 sliding out of the baseline and making contact with defensive player.

2.03b.5 pop-up slides where runner initiates contact with defensive player.

2.03b.6 sliding with spikes above the fielder's knee. (Offensive players may not hurdle a defensive player attempting to make a play or to avoid a tag.)

2.04 A defensive player may not deny an offensive player any access to a base (or plate) without possession of the ball. Obstruction is the ruling: The runner is safe and a delayed dead ball shall be called to allow play to finish.

2.04a Catchers may not block home plate without possession of the ball. (Straddling home plate is considered 'blocking' the plate. Note: USAB suggests strongly that catchers position themselves in front of the plate while awaiting a throw on a play at the plate and slide into blocking position once in possession of the baseball.)

2.04b If an umpire rules obstruction for blocking a base without the ball, the defensive player will be warned; a second warning may result in ejection.

2.04c If, in the case of a defensive player denying access to a base without possession of the ball, and the runner collides maliciously, the runner shall be declared safe on the defensive player-initiated obstruction, but will be subject to ejection from the game. The ball is dead.

2.04d if a runner initiates a collision with a defensive player attempting to make a play, it is offensive interference and the runner is out. If the collision is ruled malicious or intentional, the runner is also subject to ejection. The ball is dead on offensive interference.

2.04e Malicious contact is described as initiating contact with arms and/or elbows up or in front of the body, lowering a shoulder, use of forearm in the contact or an act in the judgment of the umpire that is intended to harm or injure another player. Malicious contact includes all elements of illegal slides.

### **3.0 Sportsmanship**

3.01 Sportsmanship and adult attitudes must prevail regardless of level of competition. Umpires are requested to eject players before, during or after games for any of the following behaviors, considered to be unsportsmanlike:

3.01a Consumption of alcoholic beverages during a game. (While USAB and its umpires cannot make judgments on sobriety, managers are requested to prohibit players who appear intoxicated or smell of alcohol from playing. Umpires will eject players who smell of alcohol.) (See Rule 3.02 regarding alcohol.)

3.01b Threats of physical intimidation of umpires, players or spectators, including any threatening physical contact.

3.01c Verbal abuse of umpires, players or spectators, such as profanity, name-calling, belittlement or excessive harassment.

3.01d Excessive profanity, defined as profanity that, in the umpire's judgment, is audible in the stands, dugouts and area surrounding the field of play, regardless of intent.

3.01e Throwing of equipment (bats, helmets, gloves, etc.).

3.01f Fighting.

3.02 Alcohol: Alcoholic beverages are prohibited at the playing sites – before, during and after all USAB tournament games. Playing sites are defined as the playing site itself plus the property owned by the same entity surrounding the playing site. This includes parking lots. Player(s) found in violation of open-container ordinances at playing sites are subject to a 2-game suspension.

3.03 Tobacco: Smoking is prohibited on the field of play or in the dugouts and their immediate area, before, during or after games. Players who wish to smoke must go to the designated smoking area or the parking lot. Player(s) found in violation of tobacco regulations at playing sites are subject to ejection.

## 4.0 Game guidelines

4.01 Games: All games are scheduled for 9 innings unless noted. Tournament Director has discretion to shorten the length of games due to weather or other logistical conditions that are beyond USAB control. Other exceptions include:

4.01a Mercy Rules: A 10 run rule will be in effect after 7 innings as well as a 15 runs after 5 innings. In the case of 7-inning games, the 10-run rule will be in effect at the end of 5 innings of play.

4.01b Time Limit: No new inning will begin after 3:00 of playing time in a scheduled 9-inning game; no new inning will begin after 2:30 of playing time in a scheduled 7-inning game, unless time limits waived by division guideline. Special Notes: While it is each team manager's responsibility to monitor time issues, umpires are requested to notify both benches at least one full inning ahead of reaching time limits. Umpires will 'stop the clock' on a) weather suspensions, b) injuries where a player requires medical attention on the field, c) to handle protests, and d) any other unavoidable delay. **There is no time limit in the Championship Finals.**

4.01c Weather issues: Weather-stopped games are suspended pending the decision of the tournament director, regardless of number of innings played. (Umpires may suspend but not declare game over in weather situations.)

4.02 Extra innings:

**Pool Play/Consolation Games:** If the score remains tied after regulation play AND the time limit has not been reached, the top of the next inning and each half inning thereafter will start with a runner on second base until there is a winner or the time limit is reached. The batter who leads off an inning shall continue to be the batter who would lead off the inning in the absence of this extra-innings rule. The runner on second base shall be the player (or substitute for such a player) in the batting order immediately preceding the batter who leads off the inning.

\*NOTE: This rule only goes into effect if the game is tied AND the time limit has NOT been reached. If the time limit is reached, and the score is tied, the game will end in a tie.

**Elimination Games:** If the score remains tied after regulation play, the top of the next inning and each half inning thereafter will start with a runner on second base until there is a winner. The batter who leads off an inning shall continue to be the batter who would lead off the inning in the absence of this extra-innings rule. The runner on second base shall be the player (or substitute for such player) in the batting order immediately preceding the batter who leads off the inning.

4.03 Lineup cards: Both managers, prior to or at the home plate meeting at the start of the game, will give the home plate umpire, the official scorekeeper (if applicable), and the opposing manager a copy of their lineup, which

MUST include:

4.03a First Initial or first name and last name.

4.03b All players (including all substitutes and relief pitchers) MUST be listed on the lineup card, even if they are not starting offensively or defensively, to be eligible to play in the game. (If a player is delayed, make sure player is listed so he can play upon arrival.)

4.03c Correct corresponding uniform number. (Incorrect numbers will incur the same penalty as batting out of order, and to challenge, follow the same rules that apply to batting out of order.

4.03d Umpires will be responsible for lineups during the game to handle eligibility questions, scorebook discrepancies, incorrect numbers, and batting out of order issues.

4.04 Batting order rules: The number of hitters in the batting order is team option; basic batting order is 9 hitters; there is no maximum. Batting order may not be reduced after the umpire receives the lineup.

4.04a Team may start a game with 8 players; the ninth batting slot is an “out” each time it comes to the plate; when ninth player shows up, he will be inserted into the ninth spot in the batting order without penalty. Exception to automatic out: See 4.04d.

4.04b If the batting or fielding contingent is fewer than 8 at any time, the game is ended with the deficient team forfeiting.

4.04c If a team begins play with 9-or-more players and all are in the offensive order (therefore, no substitutes available), and a player is forced to leave the game (offensive & defensive lineup) for an injury, no “out” will be declared when that player’s position comes to the plate. However, if the offensive player leaves the lineup for any other reason (i.e., ejection or leaving the playing site), an “out” will be declared for that vacant spot in the batting lineup each time it comes to the plate. Notes: If a player is injured and out of the game, he is removed both offensively and defensively. If an injured player wants to hit in a 9-man scenario, he must also run the bases should he reach safely.

4.04d Exception to the automatic out: A game may not end on the automatic out.

4.04e Additional hitters may be added to the end of the batting order provided that ...

4.04e.1 players are listed on lineup card;

4.04e.2 players may not have appeared anywhere else in the offensive lineup in a shared position or otherwise;

4.04e.3 offensive lineup may not be reduced at any time; exception being injury (see 4.04c above).

4.04e.4 team adding to its lineup must communicate addition to umpires, official scorekeeper and to opposing team manager prior to that player hitting.

4.05 Offensive substitution: USAB uses the Shared Lineup position to enter more than one player in any offensive batting order position.

4.05a Offensive substitution is unlimited, provided said player stays in the same spot in the lineup once he is placed there (i.e., a batter and a runner for that batter may occupy the same position in the offensive lineup; the manager must declare who is batting at that lineup position if there is a change. Neither player may appear in any other offensive lineup slot.) A manager may use an unlimited

number of players in any lineup slot, but those players cannot be used elsewhere offensively.

4.05b A shared position in the offensive lineup may be initiated any time at manager's discretion.

4.05c Managers must notify umpires, scorekeeper, and opposing manager when players in shared-lineup positions are being switched the first time in the game. (Penalty for failure to report: Handle same as batting out of order, and to challenge, follow the same rules that apply to batting out of order.

4.05d There are no courtesy runners (use line share) except for the following: A courtesy runner must be used for the pitcher and catcher with 2 outs as a speed-up rule. The courtesy runner will be the last batted out unless a line share already in place.

4.06 Defensive substitution: There will be free and unlimited defensive substitutions, without reporting to the umpire, the official scorekeeper or the opponent's scorekeeper (although it is a courtesy to do so). Exception: Pitching changes must be reported to the umpires, official scorekeeper, and opposing team manager.

4.06a Defensive players are not required to play offense, and offensive players are not required to play on defense.

4.06b All pitchers are allowed unlimited re-entry as pitcher provided they have remained in the game defensively. (Exception: If pitcher is removed on second visit by manager in the same inning, he may not return as a pitcher.) One re-entry per inning.

4.07 Official Scorebook: The Home Team's scorebook will serve as the official scorebook unless an official scorekeeper is provided by USAB.

4.08 Dugout access: Non-uniformed individuals are not allowed in open dugouts during the play of a game. Screened dugouts are exempt.



4.09 Pre-Game meeting: Managers are required to attend pre-game home plate meeting. (In case of protests and/or ruling clarifications, umpires will discuss issues only with those who attended pre-game plate meeting.)

4.10 Bat Boys: Bat boys (or girls) are allowed only in screened dugouts and are required to wear a double-ear helmet whenever out of the dugout.

4.11 Protests: Protests are allowed on misapplication of game rules. Protests on a judgment call by an umpire will be declined. Retroactive protests will not be accepted. Protests must be made at the point at which a rule has been misapplied. To protest a game, a manager must:

4.11a Stop the game before the next pitch is thrown.

4.11b Notify the umpire and the opposing manager that the game is being played under protest.

4.11c Write in the official scorekeepers scorebook the situation and on what grounds the game is being protested. The protesting manager must sign the notations.

4.11d The umpire must sign the official scorekeepers scorebook, noting the situation of the game (including the count on the hitter) when the protest was lodged.

4.11e Protesting team must write a check for \$50 to United States Adult Baseball and give it to the plate umpire (who gives it to Field Manager or event official addressing the protest). (If the protest is upheld, the \$50 will be returned.)

4.11f Umpires and managers will meet with complex Field Manager and/or USAB representative, who will contact either the Tournament Director or USAB President (via phone if not on site) and resolve the protest before resuming the game. Decision of USAB official is final.

4.12 Ejections: Ejected players must leave the field of play and the vicinity of the playing field upon gathering their belongings. Any further contact with the umpires, even after the game finishes, could bring possible disqualification from the remainder of the event. All ejections carry automatic suspension for the player and require a written report from the umpire to be submitted to the Chief of Umpires and Tournament Director immediately upon completion of the game.

4.13 Ejection reinstatement: Ejected players are suspended from further competition until they meet with the USAB Tournament Director or his representative. Failure to do so will result in a team forfeiture and further disqualification. Any player ejected twice during the tournament, regardless of reason, is disqualified from further competition (players ejected in previous USAB competition risk similar consequences). Appeal: Any player ejected twice must file a written appeal for a hearing with the Tournament Director and his Competition Committee. Decision of the committee is final.

4.14 Forfeits: If a team chooses to forfeit a pool play game, they are not eligible for the Playoffs and face suspension in U.S. Adult Baseball Tournaments. The final score of the forfeited game will be based on the team giving up a run per inning for a complete game (example 9-0 for 9 inning games and 7-0 for 7 inning games).

## **5.0 Uniforms, equipment**

5.01 Uniform: All participating players, coaches and managers must be in full, numbered, baseball uniform while within the confines of the field of play.

5.01a Uniforms must be buttoned and tucked in.

5.01b Players on composite teams may wear the uniforms of their respective teams, although matching uniforms are encouraged.

5.01c Duplicate numbers are legal. (Teams with duplicate numbers are required to note on the lineup card distinguishing features of the players with duplicate numbers.)

5.01d Players and/or coaches may not switch jerseys once play has begun.

5.01e No cutoff sleeves are permitted, either on sleeved jerseys or on T-shirts under vest jerseys.

5.01f While pitching, a pitcher may not wear white or gray undershirt sleeves or wear batting gloves on either hand or wristbands on his pitching arm. Pitcher's glove must conform to baseball standards and cannot be in color combinations that include grays or white.

5.02 Helmets: Batters and runners are required to wear NOCSAE-approved helmets. Batters are required to wear helmets with an earflap toward the pitcher. Cracked helmets are prohibited. No catchers helmets allowed while at bat. No exceptions.

5.03 Skull Caps: Catchers are required to wear a skull cap or hockey-style helmet when catching. No exceptions. Skull caps on base coaches is recommended.

5.04 Wood bats: Bats must be solid wood, cannot be hollow. Bats must be one-piece construction, i.e., no wood barrels with handles of a different composition or design. (Laminated wood bats are approved as long as they meet the specs of Item #1.) Composite bats must be of single unit, wood construction.

## **TIE BREAKER SYSTEM (For Playoff Seeding)**

**TIE GAMES IN POOL PLAY:** Pool play games can end in a tie. A tie game in pool play equals 1/2 of a win and 1/2 of a loss for both teams toward their overall record and/or winning percentage. Therefore, a team that is 2-0-1 would have a winning percentage of .833 and a team that is 2-1-0 would have a winning percentage of .667. In other words, the 2-0-1 record is better than the 2-1-0 record.

**When 2 teams are tied, follow the list below until the tie is broken:**

- ☐ Head-to-head results (if applicable)
- ☐ Least runs allowed (average per games played)
- ☐ Lowest single game runs allowed
- ☐ Each subsequent lowest single game runs allowed (2nd lowest for each team, 3rd lowest, etc.)
- ☐ Highest average run differential per games played
- ☐ Highest single game run differential
- ☐ Each subsequent highest single game run differential (2nd highest for each team, 3rd highest, etc.)
- ☐ Coin flip

**If 3 (or more) teams are tied, with the same record or winning %, use the following system to break the tie:**

- Head-to-head results (only applicable if all the tied teams played each other) - If one team beat all of the other tied teams, they will be the highest seed of the tied teams. (Even if all tied teams have not played each other)
- Continue to use head-to-head results to seed the rest of the teams in the tie.
- If one team has been beaten by all the other tied teams, they will be the lowest seed of the tied teams. (Even if all tied teams have not played each other)
- If all tied teams have the same record against each other, then they are tied at head-to-head and you move to the next item on the list (least runs allowed)
- If all of the tied teams did not play each other, head-to-head is not applicable.
- Continue down the 2-Team Tie Breaker list as stated above.