



SSUSA 2013 Rules Committee Report Minutes • Decisions • Other Actions SSUSA Annual Convention Sessions Concord, NC • December 4-5, 2013

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP –

- **Bill Ruth** (WA - SSUSA President - Chairman), **Terry Hennessy** (CA - SSUSA CEO), **Fran Dowell** (CA - SSUSA Executive Director), **Cal Allison** (FL), **David Barnes** (NV - LVSSA), **Michael Boone** (NJ), **Don Brooks** (TX), **Dave Dowell** (CA), **George Fernandes** (NV - LVSSA), **Jerry Jackson** (IL), **Randy Rowe** (MO), **Otis Rowland** (CA/OK)
- Committee members unable to attend: **Carl Gustafson** (CA), **Dale McWhorter** (AL), **Rick Seifman** (AZ) and **Joe Yacano** (IL)

The Rules Committee met in open sessions on Wednesday (2:00 - 5:00 PM) and Thursday (9:00-11:45 AM). During the Wednesday session, unrestricted public comment was received from Convention attendees who were not a part of the actual committee. On Thursday, additional public comment was allowed and encouraged, although only Rules Committee membership voted on the rules issues.

The Committee wishes to express our appreciation to the public members in attendance for their thoughtful and valuable contributions to the sessions. The public member participants were: **Ron Grassi** (WA), **Michael Koch** (NC), **Tim McElroy** (MD), **Donna McGuire** (MO) and **Chuck Sharkey** (NY).

EFFECTIVE DATE –

The effective date for all Rule Changes shall be **DECEMBER 6, 2013**, except for **RULEBOOK § 14.2(4)**.

Presented in Rulebook section order

PLAYING RULES CHANGES • APPROVED

- **RULEBOOK DEFINITION § 1.15 (OFFICIAL FIELD SPECIFICATIONS) – COMMITMENT LINE** – The Commitment Line was moved from twenty feet (20') to thirty feet (30') from the home plate/scoring line to reflect the move (over the years) of the base distance from 60' to 70'. Language was added to clarify that a foot down on or down past the commitment line commits the base runner to advance to the area of the scoring line or plate. • **ACTION: PASSED** 11-0
- **RULEBOOK § 3.4(3) – APPROVED BATS** – Excluding bats currently meeting the 1.21 BPF standard, any new bats introduced by manufacturers must bear markings indicating “Approved for SSUSA Use” or similar engraved/stamped evidence of compliance. The list of such approved bats, by manufacturer and by style, will be maintained on the SSUSA web site. • **ACTION: PASSED** 10-0
- **RULEBOOK § 3.4(5) – BAT INSPECTION** – This section is amended to require the umpire or SSUSA/SSWC Staff to remove from competition for the entire tournament any bat that exhibits significant cracking, or other deformity, whether or not arising solely from normal wear and tear. • **ACTION: PASSED** 10-0
- **RULEBOOK § 6.17 – PITCHER’S MANDATED MINIMUM SAFETY EQUIPMENT** – Pitchers are now required to wear a protective face mask at all ages and levels of play. The former “Waiver” provisions for players electing to not do so are eliminated. It is also now strongly recommended that pitchers wear protective equipment for the head, chest/heart area and the shins. The former requirement that any such protective equipment be NOCSAE-approved is now a recommendation, but not a requirement. • **ACTION: PASSED** 10-1

- **RULEBOOK §§ 8.4 (2) thru 8.4 (6) – HOME RUNS BY DIVISION** – The following are the Home Run Rules for the 2014 Season, including the maximum Home Runs by Division and the treatment of ‘excess’ Home Runs after the limit is reached. Changes noted in **Bold/Red/Italic**. • ACTION: **PASSED** 11-0

2014 HOME RUN RULES • 2013 SSUSA RULES COMMITTEE				
RATING CLASSIFICATION: AGES 40+ TO 70+	AA	AAA	MAJOR	MAJOR +
Maximum HR's – Men's 40-Masters:	n/a	6	8	10
Maximum HR's – Except Men's 40-Masters:	1	3	6	9
Treatment of excess HR's after limit:	OUTS	OUTS	OUTS	OUTS

- **RULEBOOK § 8.4(5) NOTE – (“HIT & SIT”)** – The NOTE requiring the batter and all base runners to touch the next base before returning to the dugout following an over the fence home run was repealed. The effect is that “hit and sit” is now allowed in SSUSA sanctioned events. • ACTION: **PASSED** 10-1
- **RULEBOOK § 8.9(2) – CROSSING OR TOUCHING STRIKE MAT**– The safety issue prohibition for a base runner stepping on or crossing over the strike mat is expanded to include the batter’s boxes. • ACTION: **PASSED** 11-0
- **RULEBOOK § 8.10 – SCORING LINE**– The section is amended to allow for the use of secondary scoring plates at playing facilities where such plates are present. • ACTION: **PASSED** 11-0
- **RULEBOOK § 12.1 – SENIOR SOFTBALL-USA HALL OF FAME** – The minimum age requirement for induction into the SSUSA Hall of Fame was reduced from 70 to 60 years of age. • ACTION: **PASSED** 11-0
- **RULEBOOK § 14.2(4) – AGE ELIGIBILITY AND GROUPING** – Men’s age 75+ and 80+ teams have previously been allowed to roster younger players in an effort to grow those age groups. The Committee believes those age groups are now strong enough to phase out those underage exceptions over the next two seasons.
 - ✓ **Men’s 75+ Division** – The current allowance of five (5) age 74 players is retained for the 2014 Season and is eliminated for the 2015 Season and thereafter.
 - ✓ **Men’s 80+ Division** – The current allowance of seven (7) underage players, no more than three (3) of whom may be age 78, is retained for the 2014 Season. For the 2015 Season, the allowance is reduced to three (3) players, all of whom must be age 79, and for the 2016 Season and thereafter, the allowance is eliminated, requiring all players to be age 80. • ACTION: **PASSED** 11-0
- **RULEBOOK § 14.2(6) (NEW) – TRANS-GENDER ATHLETES** – The Rules Committee was requested to consider the issue of trans-gender athletes in Senior Softball to ensure that no athlete is excluded from the opportunity to participate, but that eligibility standards are established to ensure the safety of women players and to maintain fairness in competition. The Rules Committee has adopted the standards used by the International Olympic Committee (“IOC”) to govern the eligibility of trans-gender athletes. • ACTION: **PASSED** 11-0

TECHNICAL RULEBOOK CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

- **RULEBOOK § 8.3 H – BATTER RUNNER IS OUT**– Typographical error in last print revision is corrected to reflect that the batter-runner is out when stopping/retreating to home plate rather than any base. • ACTION: **PASSED BY ACCLAMATION**
- **RULEBOOK § 8.10 – SCORING LINE** – Section amended to “...foot down on or down past the scoring line...” • ACTION: **PASSED BY ACCLAMATION**

PLAYING RULES PROPOSED CHANGES • NOT APPROVED

- **RULEBOOK DEFINITION § 8.3 – INNING** – Motion to create an exception to the definition of a new inning, for the “last” or “open” inning only, to be the first pitch of that last or open inning rather than the final out of the previous inning. • **ACTION**: **FAILED** FOR LACK OF A “SECOND” TO THE MOTION
- **RULEBOOK § 8.3 – BATTER RUNNER IS OUT** – Motion to amend rules to have the batter-runner declared out for carrying the bat to or beyond 1st base. • **ACTION**: **DEFEATED** 4-7
- **RULEBOOK § 8.4(2) – HOME RUN OVER FENCE - MAJOR PLUS** – Motion to allow excess home runs over limit be retained as “walks” for Major-Plus. • **ACTION**: **DEFEATED** 3-8

ITEMS DISCUSSED WITHOUT A VOTE TO CHANGE RULES

- **SPORTSMANSHIP / TECHNICAL OUT** – The Committee heard a presentation by a public member (rule received from Montgomery County, MD) about a league provision that allows an umpire to declare a “technical out” in matters of unsportsmanlike conduct that, while serious, may not justify a game ejection. The general consensus was that such a complicating factor in the umpire’s responsibilities, game management and judgment was not warranted for SSUSA Tournament play.
- **ROSTER COMPOSITION ISSUES** – There was an excellent discussion about Annual Master Rosters. These suggestions centered on using the teams’ “Master Rosters” that would be used for all tournaments. Further analysis by Staff may result in implementation of some of the suggestions heard by the Committee.
- **MAJOR PLUS - AGE 70+ DIVISION** – There was some discussion regarding the elimination of the Major-Plus Division for age 70+ (only), principally because the Major-Plus rules are seldom a major factor at that age level and that there is a very limited number of 70-Major+ teams. Although the topic is one of interest to the Committee, there were three members of the Rules Committee that may have been directly affected by considering this issue at this time without further study. The topic is currently an informational item only due to that inherent conflict of interest present.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave Dowell

Recording Secretary