

SSUSA 2015 Rules Committee Meetings • Reno, Nevada December 2 - 4, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT • Donna McGuire (MO / Chair / Regional U.I.C.) • Bill Ruth (WA / SSUSA President) • Terry Hennessy (CA / SSUSA C.E.O.) • Fran Dowell (CA / SSUSA Executive Director) • David Barnes (NV / LVSSA) • Michael Boone (NJ / National Director) • Don Brooks (TX / National Director) • Dave Dowell (CA / National Director) • George Fernandes (NV / LVSSA) • Carl Gustafson (CA / Delegate) • Jerry Jackson (IL / National Director) • Randy Rowe (MO / Regional Director) • Rick Seifman (AZ / National U.I.C.) – **MEMBER ABSENT** • Otis Rowland (OK / National Director) – **ALTERNATES** • Ron Grassi (WA / National Director) • Tim McElroy (MD / National Director)

AFTERNOON OPEN PUBLIC SESSION • December 2, 2015 • 2:00 - 5:30 PM

GENERAL ITEMS –

- Committee Chair Donna McGuire welcoming remarks to the Committee and announcement that Alternate Randy Rowe will replace absent Member Otis Rowland for the 2015 sessions.
- Self-introductions by Committee Members and the public membership observer/participants.
- Addition of approximately 10 items mentioned in the morning SSUSA Open Forum for Agenda inclusion consideration.

PRIOR YEAR BUSINESS –

- Approval of 2014 Rules Committee Meeting Minutes (reading of Minutes waived, followed by unanimous vote to approve)
- Brief presentation of the results of the 70-Major+/Major Task Force report commissioned at 2014 meetings. Original proponent of the Task Force requested withdrawal of the proposal, which was granted by the Chair.

NEW BUSINESS –

- General discussion and review of approximately 30 correspondence items received from the membership via email, written correspondence and public attendee topics for consideration submitted during this year's sessions to date.
 - Balance of the session spent on "technical" clean up and clarifications to specific Official Senior Softball-USA Rulebook provisions. See Exhibit "A" for specifics.
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COMMITTEE WORKING SESSION #1 • December 3, 2015 • 9:00 - 11:45 AM

The Chair allowed continued public participation (but no voting privileges) in this working session due to the quality of their contributions during the prior public sessions. The following items were acted upon by the Committee:

RESOLUTION – Resolved, that the SSUSA Staff was in full compliance with the *Official Senior Softball-USA Rulebook* at §4.2(2) in approving the roster composition additions of the 2015 World Masters Championships 50-Major Division champion Cornerstone (OR), and that the previously reported results of the competition are formally ratified. • **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

§13.1(2) • PLAYERS MUST PLAY IN REGIONS – A team comprised solely of deaf individuals participated at the 2015 WMC on an “Exhibition” basis in the 50-AA Division. They requested a waiver of the states and bordering states requirements, and offered to play at the next higher level (50-AAA), in the 2016 WMC in order to allow them to secure a sufficient number of players. It was proposed that they be allowed an exception to draw otherwise eligible players from anywhere within the United States. • **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

§13.1(3) • TEAM REGIONS OF SSWC– A 2014 Rules Committee instruction for SSUSA staff to study player density statistics in the Northeast was considered for potential implementation of a change. Following an analysis of the Northeast, it was proposed that the Northeast states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont be merged with New York and treated as a single state for the application of the state and bordering states roster composition. • **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

§ 14.2(4) – AGE ELIGIBILITY AND GROUPING – Men’s age 75+ and 80+ teams have requested that previously allowed (in prior years) exemptions for roster eligibility of players younger than the stated age grouping be reinstated. Effective **DECEMBER 3, 2015**:

- ✓ **Men’s 75+ Division** – Teams may add not more than four (4) players aged 74 to their rosters.
- ✓ **Men’s 80+ Division** – Teams may add not more than four (4) players aged 79 to their rosters.

• **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

TOURNAMENT COMPETITION POLICY • MIXED BRACKET EQUALIZERS– In tournament play where there are mixed brackets, defined as teams in different rating groups where one team is giving an equalizer, the team giving the equalizer shall be the Home team in all such games. • **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

TOURNAMENT COMPETITION POLICY • BEGINNING OF THE “OPEN INNING” – Proposal to redefine the commencement of the “open inning” as the moment of the first pitch in an inning that begins after the base game time has expired. The current rule is that any inning begins at the moment of the last out made in the prior inning. The effect would be to adopt the local “Las Vegas Rule” for all sanctioned play. • **FAILED 1:11**

TOURNAMENT COMPETITION POLICY • HOME TEAM IN CHAMPIONSHIP GAME(S) – Proposal to give the option of being Home Team in any Championship game to the team emerging unbeaten from the Winner’s Bracket and to give the winner of that Championship game the same option for any required “If needed” game. • **FAILED 2:9**

§5.5(2) • THE FLIP-FLOP RULE – The “flip-flop” rule is amended to be mandatory in any tournament game, seeding pool play or bracket play, when the Visitor is ahead by 10 runs or more at the commencement of the “open inning.” • **PASSED 10:1 (1 ABSTAINED)**

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY POLICY • RATING HISTORY TERM – For players age 70+ and older, the player rating history term for roster eligibility is reduced from [1] the current Season and the two full preceding Seasons to [2] the current Season and the immediately previous full Season. Effective **DECEMBER 4, 2015** • **PASSED 9:1**

COMMITTEE WORKING SESSION #2 • December 4, 2015 • 9:00 - 10:45 AM

§6.16 • WIND OR SUN AFFECTING BOTH PITCHERS – Proposal to amend the **EFFECT** at end of section. 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. • **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

FIELD SPECIFICATION AMENDMENT • PLACEMENT OF STRIKE MAT – Proposal to move the strike mat an additional 8½ inches further from the pitching rubber for the purpose of reducing the incidence of batters being called out for stepping out of the front of the batter's box. • **FAILED UNANIMOUSLY**

§8.4(7) • FOUR BASE AWARD – Proposal to conform the obligations after the award of a four base award. Batter-runner and runners on base would not be required to touch any base or bases and would be allowed to "hit and sit." • **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

TOURNAMENT DECORUM POLICY • CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES – Proposal to prohibit the consumption of alcoholic beverages in the dugouts or within the confines of the playing field. The penalty shall be the ejection of the player for the remainder of the team's games for that day. • **PASSED 9:1 (1 ABSTAINED)**

DEFINITION §1.37 • INTENTIONALLY DROPPED FLY BALL – Proposal to clarify by adoption of the ASA Rule on this topic, specifically that the ball is dead and minus the ASA provision regarding a bunt, which is inapplicable in SSUSA sanctioned play. • **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

TOURNAMENT COMPETITION POLICY • NUMBER OF DEFENSIVE PLAYERS ON A TEAM – Proposal to mandate the use of 11 Defensive players for all ages and levels of play except for Men's and Women's 40-Masters Divisions. • **FAILED 1:11**

§13.1 • COMPETITION – Proposal to require all teams aged 40+ through 65+ to compete in the World Masters Championships ONLY in their native age group. Teams would be prohibited from playing down one age and one rating level. • **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

§15.1 C. • INDIVIDUAL AWARDS – All-Tourney Awards shall remain at 14 (5/4/3/2) to recognize the accomplishments of more players from the top four finishers in larger brackets at the World Masters Championships. For all other sanctioned tournament play, the number shall be reduced to 12, for the top three finishing teams (5/4/3). • **PASSED 9:1**

CHAIRPERSON / TASK FORCE & RULES COMMITTEE • Donna McGuire was nominated to serve as the 2016 SSUSA Rules Committee. • **ELECTED 10:0**

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Dowell

Recording Secretary

EXHIBIT "A" • Technical Rulebook Provision Clarifications

**This section is under construction and will appear after
having passed detail technical review**

EXHIBIT "B" • Other Topics Proposed for Consideration

The following topics were brought to the attention of the Rules Committee for potential Agenda consideration by either public member proposal at the open meetings, prior correspondence received (by email or written letters) from the public, or by Rules Committee members during the course of the sessions. There was committee discussion on all of these issues, but they failed to make it to official Agenda status due to either the lack of a motion for consideration, lack of a second to a motion for consideration, and/or the request to withdraw an active Agenda item by the sponsor and second.

The Committee is pleased with the "State of the Game" from a rules perspective and we sought to make changes only where they were mandated. The failure of any specific topic proposed to result in change has no bearing on the Committee's perception of their importance to those who brought them to our attention. Thank you to all who took the time to appear or write. Your contributions were significant and invaluable to us.

The following non-agenda items are presented in the chronological order they were discussed during the Sessions.

1. Request that equalizer runs should not count in seeding calculations.
2. Request to eliminate equalizer situations in tournament play by forbidding participation by singleton teams.
3. Playing in Regions –
 - a. Canadian teams request eligibility to draw players from any Canadian Province.
 - b. Request for states and bordering states rules to include large bodies of water, such as IL and MI (Lake Michigan) or FL and LA (Gulf of Mexico).
4. Request for SSUSA to monitor and protect against multiple like-sounding team names (already done by SSUSA staff).
5. Request to modify equalizer rules in time or weather shortened games (already done in Rulebook).
6. Request to allow the use of Pitching Screens in tournament play.
7. Request to eliminate (or modify) award to Eastern and Western National Champions of Bracket #1 and #2 Seeds for brackets of five or more teams at World Masters Championships.
8. Requests to increase the size of the strike mat.
9. Request to establish a "Pitcher Protection Zone" through the middle of the infield.
10. Request to allow the batter-runner and defender equal access to the two portions of the double 1st base in the event of an errant throw or other circumstance that could result in collision.
11. Request to have SSUSA Home Office arbitrate and/or decide Player Releases when Manager declines to release a player.
12. Request to require Courtesy Runner entry to be before the first pitch to the next batter.
13. Request to allow games to end in a tie in pool play, awarding a ½-victory and ½-loss to the teams.
14. Request to standardize official base distance at 70' for all ages of play for both men and women.
15. Request to impose a maximum game time limit of 75 or 80 minutes for Championship game(s).
16. Request to require touching all bases in Home Run or Four Base Award situations by repeal of "hit and sit" provisions.
17. Request to reduce the number of allowed "out of rating players" on rosters below Major+.
18. Request to require physical presence by all players to be eligible for inclusion on official game card.
19. Request for modification to rules regarding "no-fly zone" over the strike mat and batter's box.