



SSUSA 2024-25 National Rules Committee

Official Minutes

December 4 - 6, 2024

Tucson, Arizona

MEMBERS PRESENT • Donna McGuire (MO/Chair/Regional U.I.C.) • Terry Hennessy (CA/SSUSA C.E.O.) • Fran Dowell (CA/SSUSA Executive Director) • Don Brooks (TX/Director) • Mike Dembicki (MI/Director) • Dave Dowell (CA/Director) • Ron Grassi (WA/Director) • Butch Jones (WA/Director) • Jeffrey Kimoto (HI/Director) • Tim McElroy (MD/VP/Director) • Rick Seifman (AZ/VP) • Linda Weber (KS/Director)

PUBLIC ATTENDEES • Nic Francois (SSUSA Office) • Stephanie Hopkins (SSUSA Office) • Nancy Allen (IN/Director) • Katheryn Jones (WA/Director) • Ron Perkins (TX/Director) • Brian Pryor (WA/Director) • Mike Dill (Rawlings Sports) • Mark Hojnacki (AZ) • Nick Longo (AZ) • Gary Kruse (NE) • Brad Tiedeken (MN) • Mark Weber (AZ)

RULES COMMITTEE OPEN PUBLIC SESSION - DECEMBER 4, 2024

GENERAL ITEMS –

- Welcome remarks from Committee Chair Donna McGuire and Agenda overview.
- Self-introductions by Committee Members and the public membership attending.

NEW BUSINESS –

- General discussion and review of approximately 29 [1] correspondence items received from the membership via email, written correspondence and [2] public attendee topics for consideration submitted during this session.
- **MEETING ADJOURNED**

WORKING & VOTING SESSION • DECEMBER 5, 2024

§1.29 • BATTERS BOX AND §7.3 • BATTING POSITION – The language from the changes made at the 2023 National Rules Committee sessions is modified to eliminate a technical inconsistency that was present between the two provisions. Section 1.29 is modified as noted below in strike-out type:

~~“The batter must take an initial position with his back foot no further forward than a line defining the front edge of home plate. The batter will be called out if he hits the ball when the back foot is completely further forward than the line defining the front edge of home plate. NOTE: All other illegally batted ball infractions regarding the side and rear lines of the batter’s box, along with stepping on home plate, remain in effect.”~~

- **PASSED: 5-1-4**

§1.5 • FOUL TIP & §7.4 C. • STRIKE CALLED BY UMPIRE – *TECHNICAL CORRECTION* – Proposal to modify the wording of these sections to make them easier to understand. Suggest adding sentences to foul tip definition to say: “**A foul tip cannot be caught for an out. Note: Other balls (including one that goes over the batter’s head) can be caught for an out.**” And also change 7.4.C by removing the phrase “the final strike” from the EFFECT sentence, which then would read: “**The ball is dead.**” • **PASSED: 10-0-0**

§3.4 C. • OFFICIAL BATS – The description of bats that are not legal for use is expanded to include bats with visible cracks and those previously marked as not legal for use because of excessive wear and tear or failed field compression testing. • **PASSED: 10-0-0**

§3.4(4) • ALTERED EQUIPMENT – Proposal to ban the use of bat warmers was presented, adopting the USA Softball rule that states: “[T]he characteristics of any approved equipment cannot be unnaturally changed. Examples include icing, cooling, or heating of any equipment. In addition, approved bats shall not be rolled, shaved or modified to change their characteristics from that produced by the manufacturer. **Warming devices for bats are not approved.**” • **PASSED: 9-1-0**

§3.4(6) A. • PENALTY FOR USING AN ALTERED BAT OR SOFTBALL – *TECHNICAL CORRECTION* – Section amended to change the term “use” of an altered bat to “possessing” an altered bat • **NO VOTE**

§4.2(2)E. • ADDING / RELEASING ROSTER PLAYERS – Proposal to modify the current exclusive vesting of player releases with the manager to allow the player one release per season without the consent of the manager. • **FAILED: 0-9-1**

§5.12 • UMPIRE ANNOUNCES TIME REMAINING – Proposal to add language that would redefine the end of an inning. Currently, an inning ends and the next inning begins at the moment the third out is made in the home half of the inning. The proposed change would define the start of the next inning as the moment of the first pitch of the next inning, potentially making that the “open” inning. • **FAILED: 3–5-2**

§7.1 D. 2. • BATTING ORDER – *TECHNICAL CORRECTION* – Section amended to add clarification that “outs called on base runners on the play remain outs.” • **NO VOTE**

§8.4(1) • BATTER-RUNNER REACHING FIRST BASE – Proposal to allow for Courtesy Runners from home to first base for 80+ and 85+ divisions • **FAILED: 0-10-0**

§13.1(2) • PLAYERS MUST PLAY IN REGIONS – Proposal to allow Major Plus teams in certain age groups to have varying, and increasing numbers of “out of region” players and remove the Mississippi River East/West limitation • **FAILED: 0-10-0**

§13.1(2) • PLAYERS MUST PLAY IN REGIONS – Proposal to modify end note to section to remove the geographic limitation of the Mississippi River for purposes of player eligibility East/West of that river. Major Plus teams 40+ through 70+ may draw up to four players from anywhere. • **PASSED: 8-2-0**

§13.1.(3) A. 2. • TEAM REGIONS OF SSWC – Beginning with the 2026 Season, for Men’s 40+ through 60+ teams rated AA and AAA, the two (2) currently allowed “out of region” players are phased out. All players must be from the home state and bordering state(s) or must have a current year valid snowbird card. • **PASSED: 10-0-0** – *MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION: • PASSED: 10-0-0* – *MOTION TO TABLE PENDING SSUSA STAFF REVIEW AND REPORT: • PASSED: 10-0-0*

§13.1(3) D. • TEAM REGIONS OF SSWC – Proposal to merge the regions of Eastern Canada and Western Canada into a single region for Major Plus teams. • **FAILED: 2-3-4**

§13.4(2) B. • U.S. NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS – Proposal to extend the preferred seeding treatment for winners of the Eastern or Western National championships to brackets at the World Championships comprised of less than five (5) teams. • **PASSED: 5-3-2**

§13.5 • TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS – Proposal to extend an invitation to the Tournament of Champions to any team that finishes as a finalist to a team that previously won a bid to the Tournament of Champions in the current season • **FAILED: 0-8-2**

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER #1 • ROSTER PROTEST / APPEAL TIME LIMIT – A team wishing to lodge an appeal of a roster for ineligible player(s) must file that appeal with the SSUSA Home Office not later than 30 days following the conclusion of the World Championships for the current season. • **PASSED: 8-2-0**

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER #2 • ALLOWED NUMBER OF “EXEMPTION” PLAYERS – A team wishing to add one-time “exemption” players for a specific qualifier tournament roster may add a maximum of two such otherwise eligible players to bring the total roster limit to one over the native defensive alignment.

• **PASSED: 10-0-0**

• **MEETING ADJOURNED**

CLOSING SESSION • DECEMBER 6, 2024

• **CHAIRWOMAN RETENTION** – In recognition of the fine performance (again) by the chair, Donna McGuire was nominated to remain in that leadership position for another year. • **PASSED: 10-0-0**

• **2024 NATIONAL RULES COMMITTEE SESSIONS ADJOURNED**

Prepared this 6th Day of December, 2024 –
Respectfully submitted,

Dave Dowell

DAVE DOWELL
Recording Secretary

EXHIBIT “A” • 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 the Committee.

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

1. Limit/prohibit outfielder put outs in the 80+ and 85+ divisions
2. For 80+ teams, require 80+ players to play before 78-79+ players may play in games
3. Allow designated hitters (DH’s) for pitchers in 80+ and 85+ divisions
4. Allow pitching screens to be used in 80+ and 85+ divisions
5. Limit intentional walks and penalize for excessive intentional walks
6. Change foul tip rule to allow all foul tips to be caught for an out
7. Create and play regional Final Four semi-finals before the World’s for U.S. Nat’l Championships
8. Restore a required coin toss for all games played
9. Create a format for the coin toss protocol for Best 2 of 3 Championship Series
10. Require a World Champion to play at the next highest level for two years rather than only one
11. Eliminate after-dark games in the 65+ and more senior age divisions
12. Adopt the “Golden At-bat” recently proposed for testing in minor league baseball