

**2004 USSSA SLOW PITCH NATIONAL BY-LAWS**

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# UNITED STATES SPECIALTY SPORTS ASSOCIATION

## 2004 USSSA SLOW PITCH NATIONAL BY-LAWS

**NOTE:** Use of the word "he" in this publication is intended to include both the masculine and feminine genders unless otherwise noted.

### ARTICLE I – ORGANIZATION

"USSSA Slow Pitch Softball" shall be a sports division of the United States Specialty Sports Association and shall be governed by the Constitution of the United States Specialty Sports Association, By-laws of USSSA Slow Pitch Softball, the USSSA Slow Pitch Softball Rule Book, Directives, and Policies as issued from the Association's National Headquarters.

### ARTICLE II - TEAM ELIGIBILITY

**Sec. 1.** This Association shall be for amateur Slow Pitch players to compete as a team under an adopted set of administrative rules and playing rules.

**Sec. 2.** No team shall be allowed to compete in USSSA sanctioned leagues or tournaments without paying their National and State team registration fees to the Association.

**Sec. 3.** A team must be composed of not more than 20 eligible players. Coaches or managers must be included in the 20 in order to be eligible to play.

**Sec. 4.** When a member of a team is called into the **military**, he may be replaced by any other eligible player. Players returning from active **military** service may be added to a team's eligible roster, provided the number of eligible players on the team's roster does not exceed the total number allowed at any one time.

**Sec. 5.** The cut-off date for adding players to a team roster shall be in accordance with rules set forth in these By-laws.

**Sec. 6.** A team winning a tournament and advancing to a higher tournament may be allowed expense money in accordance with advance rules governing the tournament which rules shall be promulgated by the National Headquarters of the Association and are consistent with the Constitution of the USSSA. Such expense monies shall be presented to the team and not the individual players and must be used by the team to offset team expenses. This same rule shall apply to any such rule governing league winners advancing to tournaments.

**Sec. 7.** Teams properly registered with the Association may be given permission to compete against, or on the same program with teams, when it has been publicized that other team's members will be eligible to receive a portion of the gross receipts. Such approval may be granted by State or Area Directors.

**Sec. 8.** (a) An official USSSA team registration receipt must be obtained by all teams that wish to compete in out-of-state tournaments sanctioned by the USSSA. The team registration receipt form must be approved by the traveling team's State Director or a Vice President. The form must be shown to the Tournament Director before the team competes in the out-of-state tournament. This registration receipt will be good for the entire current season as long as the team is in good standing with the USSSA.

(d) The team registration receipt form will consist of three copies as follows:

Original (white copy) - This copy will be retained by the Team Manager. This copy should be shown to the Tournament Director.

Duplicate (yellow copy) - This copy must be forwarded to the USSSA National Headquarters.

Duplicate (blue copy) - To be retained by the originator.

(c) State Directors or Vice Presidents, who issue Team Registration Receipt Forms, shall be responsible for collection and payment of Team Registration fees. The registration of teams is the responsibility of the state or area in which the team first participates.

(d) A Tournament Director shall not accept an out-of-state team without a team registration receipt, unless:

1. He contacts the team's State Director to establish proper team classification.
2. He collects the proper team registration fee if the team cannot show proof of prior registration. A team registration form should then be filled out.
3. He issues a team registration receipt showing the proper team classification.
4. He submits the proper paperwork and fees to the Association's National Headquarters with copies of the paperwork sent to the team's State Director.

Tournament Directors in violation of this rule shall be subject to sanction by the Association and the Tournament which violated this rule may not be considered sanctioned by the Association and the awarding of any advancement berth may not be honored.

**Sec. 9.** (a) Each year the Major Players National Committee, with the assistance of State Directors, shall compile a list of male players who will be classified as Major Players. The list shall be completed by December 1st of each year and shall be posted on the Association's Official Website. Such posting on the Official Website shall constitute a notice to players, managers, and sponsors as to whom the Major Players are for the new season. Any male player who signs a personal service contract will automatically be placed on the Major Players List at any time during the year.

(b) Any player, whose name appears on the Major Players List, shall have the right to appeal the listing to the Major Player National Committee. Any such appeal must be made prior to April 1st.

**Sec. 10.** A State Director has the authority to reclassify any team during the current season except when a team has been reclassified by the Constitution or By-laws.

**Sec. 11.** (a) Teams reclassified by the Constitution or By-laws must participate in their new classification for a period of one year. (Note: Any team reclassified by the Constitution or By-laws with 5 or more players from the previous years roster must participate in their new classification for a period of one year; however, teams reclassified by the By-laws may make an appeal to be reinstated to its former classification only after the team has made a reasonable effort to participate in the new classification.) Such an appeal must be made no later than July 1st. (Except in the Mixed Program, which is no later than October 1st.) The appeal must be made jointly to the State Director and the applicable National Program Director. If the team is not part of a specialty program, then the appeal must be made jointly to the State Director and the applicable Vice President. In the event the State Director and the Vice President are the same person, then the applicable Executive Vice President will become involved in the place of the Vice President. A decision on all appeals must be rendered within 10 days. Copies of the appeal decisions must be forwarded to National within five days after the decision is made.

(b) Any team except a Men's Major, "A," or "B" team that is automatically classified by playing rules 1 through 29 in the USSSA Slow Pitch Rule Book may appeal their classification. The appeal must be in writing and sent to their State Director and the National Program Director. If the State Director and the

National Program Director cannot agree, then the appeal will be sent to the Executive Vice President in charge of the Program Director for a final resolution.

**Sec. 12.** Any men's class "B," "C," "D," or "E" team that has five or more players from any combination of teams moved up within the same classification, or players from a team from the previous season of the same or higher classification of the team's new classification must participate in the new classification for a period of one year with the same restrictions as outline in Sec. 11. above.

**Sec. 13.** Male Team Rosters shall include only male players and female team rosters shall include only female players.

**Sec. 14.** All playing rules incorporated into the Adult Program shall automatically be extended to include specialty programs of that gender, except Sixteen Inch and Slow Pitch Overhand softball.

### ARTICLE III - INDIVIDUAL PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

**Sec. 1.** A player is eligible to compete in the USSSA program as long as he abides by the USSSA Constitution, By-laws, and Playing Rules, when listed as a member of an eligible team.

**Sec. 2.** A player may receive remuneration for actual necessary expenses incurred for travel, lodging, or meals as follows:

#### TRAVEL EXPENSE GUIDELINES

- (a) \$25 per day for meal allowances.
- (b) Payment of up to federal limits per mile auto allowance to travel to and from home to playing destination.
- (c) Exact reimbursement for rail, airfare, and ground transportation.
- (d) Exact reimbursement for lodging expenses.

The above player expense limits are established for all programs. Any player receiving compensation above the travel expense guidelines must have a registered personal contract.

**Sec. 3.** A personal services contract is a contract between and individual sponsor, sporting goods manufacturer, or other sponsor and a player, which provides for the player to receive compensation, including bonuses, promotional fees and the like, which are paid in addition to those set forth in the USSSA travel expense guidelines as set forth in Sec. 2 above. All sponsors, manufactures, and players who have business understandings which fall within the definition of a personal services contract are required to memorialize such understandings in written form on contracts which substantially conform to those provided by the USSSA National Office.

Such contracts must be filed and approved with the USSSA National Office prior to participation in the USSSA program.

**Sec. 4.** (a) Any male player who signs a personal services contract is limited to competition in only the following USSSA programs:

- 1. Men's Major Program
- 2. Men's Military Program
- 3. Men's Hispanic Competitive Program

4. Mixed Class "A" Program
5. Men's Corporate Class "A" Program
6. Black American Competitive Program
7. Men's Masters 35, 40, 45, 50 and Over Programs

(b) Any female player who signs a personal services contract is limited to competition in only the following USSSA programs:

1. Mixed Class "A" Program
2. Women's Class "A" Program
3. Women's **Military** Program
4. Women's Corporate Program
5. Women's Masters Program
6. Women's Hispanic Competitive Program

**Sec. 5.** A player shall not be permitted to accept an award other than a watch, charm, trophy, jacket, bat, or other like award.

**Sec. 6.** The method to be used to classify a player as a participant in all programs will be governed by rules made within a State and the USSSA Constitution and By-laws.

**Sec. 7.** A player shall not compete in any sanctioned tournament of the Association with more than one team during the same tournament.

**Sec. 8.** A tournament director may not manage, coach, participate as a player, or umpire in any tournament in which he serves as a Tournament Director.

**Sec. 9.** (a) When a team qualifies for a State, National, or World Tournament, including the World Series, the team roster will be frozen whether a team accepts the berth or not. The team roster becomes frozen immediately at the qualifying event. Players will be bound to this qualified team up to and including the team's respective State, National, or World Tournament, including the World Series. A team may decline a National or World Tournament berth that is passed down. The team manager shall be allowed to add only three players to the qualified team's roster. The three added players may be added as late as 72 hours prior to the start of the State, National, or World Tournament. No player may be added to a roster within 72 hours of any championship tournament. Such additional players can only be added to rosters that have openings to allow for such add-ons.

(b) A team manager may release up to three players from his team's qualified frozen roster. A team manager cannot replace a released player with an add-on. No player will be allowed to be released from a qualified team's roster after August **20th**.

(c) Exception to Sec. 9. (a) and (b) above as follows:

1. Teams advancing to the Men's Major World Series may add players as specified in these By-laws as outlined in Article VI, Sec. 2.
2. Teams advancing to the Mixed World Tournament, including the Mixed World Series, or a Mixed State Tournament held after Labor Day shall be allowed to add four players to their roster.

One of the four added players may be added as late as 72 hours prior to the Championship Tournament. Other roster additions must be made two weeks prior to the Championship event.

3. Teams advancing to the Mixed World Tournament, including the Mixed World Series or a Mixed State Tournament held after Labor Day shall be allowed to release up to four players from the team's qualified frozen roster. Such releases must be made two weeks prior to the Championship Tournament. A team cannot replace a released player with an add-on.

(d) All players added to qualified frozen rosters must meet the following requirements:

1. Players must have played for a registered USSSA team that competed in a sanctioned USSSA tournament or league prior to August 1st of the current season.
2. Players cannot be on another qualified team's roster within the same program.

NOTE: A qualified team's roster remains frozen until the conclusion of the highest possible Tournament in that team's respective program. For example: In the Men's Class "A," "B," "C," "D," and "E" programs, a qualified team's roster is frozen until the conclusion of all championship play in the Men's Program.

3. Players who are added to a roster of a qualified team must not have played for a team of higher classification during the current season within the same program. For example: In the Men's program, a player added to a roster from a qualified Men's Class "C" team must not have played for a Men's Class "B" team or higher. For example: In the Men's Class "A," "B," "C," "D," and "E" programs, a qualified team's roster is frozen until the conclusion of all championship play in the Men's program.

4. All roster additions must be approved by the State Director, or in his absence, the Vice President.

(e) Any exceptions to Article III, Sec. 9 above must be approved by the respective Vice President and the appropriate Executive Vice President.

**Sec. 10.** Any player that is released from a qualifying team's roster cannot return to that team during the current season. A player may be released from only one qualified roster during the current season.

**Sec. 11.** A team with a frozen roster with less than ten players which has used all options for additions and releases may apply for status of disbandment with the State Director. If approval is given, the team forfeits all berths and sponsor travel monies earned. A disbanded team may not reform with more than 9 players. Teams may not apply for disbandment after August 1st. A mixed team may not apply after September 15th.

**Sec. 12.** Any player who either plays, or is under contract to play, professional Slow Pitch softball will not be allowed to participate in the USSSA program as a player. Players who have been released as a professional Slow Pitch Softball player may apply for reinstatement as an amateur player with the USSSA as follows:

(a) Any former professional Slow Pitch softball player who has been released contractually for one year may apply to the USSSA National Office for amateur status at any time. If reinstatement is approved, then the player will be eligible to participate in the USSSA program. If the player has been released for two or more years, he or she is automatically reinstated as an amateur, and is not required to apply for written reinstatement.

(b) Any former professional Slow Pitch softball player who has been released for less than a year may apply to the USSSA National Office for amateur status prior to April 1st of any given year. If reinstatement is approved, then the player will be eligible to participate in the USSSA program. If the player does not apply for reinstatement prior to April 1st, then he or she must wait until they have been contractually released for one year before applying for reinstatement.

(c) A player who tries out for a professional Slow Pitch softball team and does not play in any scheduled games shall not be considered a professional.

**Sec. 13.** A player who is in violation of the Association's Constitution, By-laws, and/or official playing rules and regulations shall be considered an ineligible player.

**Sec. 14.** Anytime during the game or after, if the Tournament Director discovers an ineligible player, he has the authority to apply penalties as described in the USSSA Constitution, By-laws, and Rule Book.

**Sec. 15.** Anytime during a tournament game or after, or after the completion of a tournament, if an ineligible player is discovered, up to one year from the tournament date, penalties may be applied as described in the USSSA Constitution, By-laws, and Rule Book.

**Sec. 16.** All sections under Article III shall apply to sanctioned USSSA leagues if the league offers a National or World Tournament berth.

**Sec. 17.** Anyone who is a State Director, National Director, or National Officer of the Association shall not be eligible to participate in the program as a player, team manager, or team sponsor in tournament play unless approval is given by the next higher level of authority.

**Sec. 18.** All players participating in adult USSSA tournament play shall have photo ID available. Failure to do so will result in Rule 4, Sec. 11-A5 in the USSSA Rule Book to be applied. The offending team loses the game, is ejected from the tournament, placed in last in the standings, and forfeits all awards, sponsors, travel money, and tournament berths that would have been awarded at the tournament.

## **ARTICLE IV - STATE AND INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS**

**Sec. 1.** The State or Area Director shall conduct all tournaments within his defined area or assure himself that proper administration is being effected at all times.

**Sec. 2.** No team will be allowed to compete in any State or Invitational Tournament unless they are registered with the Association. A team can only participate in a State Tournament in one state during a season.

**Sec. 3.** Amounts to be charged as entry fees for such tournaments shall be left up to the discretion of the respective State or Area Director.

**Sec. 4.** The number of trophies and awards and amount of travel monies to be awarded will be left up to the discretion of the State Director or a Vice President.

**Sec. 5.** (a) It shall be left up to each State to decide on an acceptable method to control team rosters and classifications of all programs.

(b) The main criteria for classifying teams is the overall strength of the team offensively and defensively regardless of whether the team has any home run hitters. Example: Depending on the strength of the offense and defense, a team with no home run hitters may be classified Major, "A," "B," "C," "D," or "E."

**Sec. 6.** Each State or Area Director shall adopt an acceptable system to be used for qualifying teams for State and National Tournaments. Established league participation may be included in such a system if so desired.

**Sec. 7.** All State Champions shall automatically qualify themselves for next year's State Tournament provided they register with the Association.

**Sec. 8.** No tournament shall be considered as sanctioned by the Association if all applicable fees and registrations are not promptly paid to the Association.

**Sec. 9.** All National and World qualifying tournaments must be held prior to August 20th of each season.

**Sec. 10. (a)** Only USSSA approved softballs can be used in State and Invitational Tournaments. Such approval will be made by the Association's Board of Directors.

(b) All USSSA registered or sanctioned leagues, that are played on facilities that are covered under the USSSA Liability Insurance Policy as an additional named insured must use at all times a USSSA approved licensed softball.

**Sec. 11.** State tournaments shall be scheduled to provide each team at least two games of participation. This can be changed at the site of the tournament, by the tournament director, after the starting date of the tournament has begun and it is determined that it would not be feasible to attempt to continue on the double loss plan due to weather conditions or other acts of God. A substitute plan will be decided upon at the tournament site. NOTE: This substitute plan may include using the One Pitch Rule as specified in Rule 17, Sec. 2. of the USSSA Rule Book.

**Sec. 12.** Refund of Tournament Entry fees for any USSSA sanctioned tournament will be made only under the following conditions. Request for refund must be made in writing prior to the published tournament cut-off date for acceptance of entries. Such requests must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested to the tournament director. The U.S. Postal mark will be considered as date of refund request. Immediately upon receipt of such request, the tournament director will forward check to cover the fee previously paid. Tournament directors shall not be compelled to make refunds after the published tournament cut-off date regardless of circumstances.

**Sec. 13.** If a division does not hold a particular national tournament then no state within that division can hold a state tournament in that same particular classification on Labor Day weekend.

## **ARTICLE V - NATIONAL, NATIONAL INVITATIONAL, OR WORLD TOURNAMENTS**

**Sec. 1.** The USSSA Slow Pitch Softball Program National Committee shall decide each year, at the Annual National Meeting, what tournaments are to be classified as National, National Invitational, or World Tournaments. This committee shall approve all dates for such tournaments to be held.

**Sec. 2.** All playing fields used in National, National Invitational, or World Tournaments must meet the specifications as outlined in the Official Rule Book. All playing fields must have outfield fences. Any field with outfield fences located closer to, or farther from, home plate than what the Official USSSA Rule Book specifies must be approved in advance by the Association's Executive Director or appropriate Executive Vice President.

**Sec. 3.** USSSA licensed softballs displaying the USSSA approval or USSSA logo must be used in National, National Invitational, or World Tournaments. Approval of softballs to be used in the USSSA program must be made by executing an Official Licensing and Royalty Agreement, prepared by the Association's General Counsel, and signed by the Association's Executive Director.

**Sec. 4.** Team sponsor travel expense monies, may be awarded at State, National, National Invitational, or World Tournaments. Travel expense monies may be awarded in qualifying tournaments that lead to advancement to a State, National, National Invitational, or World Tournament. The awards can only be made when the team participates at the higher classified tournament. In the Women's program if the first or second place team does not advance to the World Tournament, then the travel money will be passed to the next team(s) that is advancing to the World Tournament.

**Sec. 5.** National, National Invitational, and World Tournament play shall be under the jurisdiction of the Association's Executive Director. A tournament director shall supervise the event and be responsible for insuring that the tournament is run according to all rules, procedures, and terms of the written contract and to insure that the event is run according to all rules and regulations of the Association. The tournament director in carrying out his or her duties shall report directly to the Association's Executive Director or Assistant Executive Director. An Executive

Vice President or Vice President of the Division that is hosting the tournament, may act, when called upon, as a liaison officer between the host tournament sponsor and the Association's Executive Director or Assistant Executive Director.

**Sec. 6.** (a) National, National Invitational, or World Tournaments with twelve or more entries may not be canceled for lack of participation.

(b) National, National Invitational or World Tournaments that draw less than twelve teams must notify all teams that they have the option of withdrawing from the tournament with a full entry fee refund.

(c) National, National Invitational, or World Tournaments requesting cancellation must do so by notifying the Executive Director or an Executive Vice President within 24 hours of the published tournament cut-off date.

(d) If a tournament is canceled for lack of participation, no USSSA tournament of the same classification may be held at that location on that date.

(e) Mixed National, National Invitational, or World Tournaments may combine divisions only if there are less than six entries in a division. "A" may combine only with "B," "B" may combine with "C," or "C" may combine with "D." Three or four divisions may not combine together.

(f) In Mixed "A/B" NIT tournaments with less than six teams, the Tournament Director has the option to run the event without trophies, with one Umpire, and/or without scorekeepers. Teams must be notified by the Tournament Director in advance of these changes and given the option to play or withdraw.

**Sec. 7.** Amounts to be charged as team entry fees for National or World Tournaments will be decided upon by Association's Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall also decide what percentage of the entry fee shall go to the National Treasury.

**Sec. 8.** Teams participating in the National or World Tournaments, including the World Series, must compete within their respective classifications for championship play. For example: A Men's Class "C" team must participate in the Men's Class "C" National Tournament to be eligible for the Men's Class "C" World Tournament.

**Sec. 9.** Teams participating in National or World Tournaments, including the World Series, must be completely uniformed within the following guidelines:

➔(a) World Series teams must wear similar uniforms. This includes caps, jerseys, long pants or shorts, and leggings. Whether long pants or shorts are worn, all team members must wear similar uniforms. In the Women's and Mixed World Series caps are optional; however, when worn, they must be similar. In the Mixed World Series, long or short pants are optional; however, when worn, long pants and/or short pants shall be similar.

(b) All Girl's Youth, Corporate Class "A," and Men's "A" teams must wear similar uniforms. This includes jerseys, long pants or shorts, and leggings. Whether long pants or shorts are worn, all team members must wear similar uniforms. Caps are optional; however, when worn, they must wear similar uniforms.

(c) All Men's Class "B" and "C" and Women's "A," "B," "C," and "D" teams must wear similar uniforms. This includes the same color and style jerseys, with or without the team sponsor's name. Long pants and/or shorts may be worn. Leggings, when worn, must be similar on all team members. Caps are optional; however, when worn, they must be similar.

(d) All Masters, Church, Corporate "B," Union Local, and Men's Military Varsity "A" and "B" teams must wear similar uniforms. This includes same color and style jerseys, with or without the team or sponsor's name. Long pants or shorts and leggings, when worn, must be similar on all team members. Caps are optional, however, when worn, they must be similar.

(e) All Men's Class "D" and "E," Mixed, Hispanic, 16-Inch, Law Enforcement, Men's Military Intramural, Women's Military, Black American, and Native American Teams must wear similar uniforms.

(f) All Boys' Youth Teams must wear alike colored jerseys that are similar and with numbers.

(g) In the Women's program, Girl's Youth Program, and Master's Program non-duplicating numbers will be required at National and World Tournaments as well as all divisions of Mixed World. The numbers must be a minimum of three inch in size and clearly visible.

(h) Shoes and under jerseys, regardless of color and style will be permitted as long as they meet USSSA Rule Book specifications. Protests on uniforms will not be allowed. It shall be the Tournament Director's responsibility regarding to determine uniform legality.

(i) Violation of the uniform rule will result in the violator being allowed to conform or be removed from the game.

**Sec. 10.** Teams may become eligible to participate in National or World Tournaments as follows:

(a) The Preceding year's champion and runner-up, depending on USSSA policy and regulations, may be required to move up to a higher classification of play or may be invited back. However, in either case they will receive an automatic berth and will be required to pay their team entry fee for the tournament. The preceding year's champion and runner-up must have at least 50% of its preceding year's roster returning in order to receive the automatic World or National berth. The preceding year's champion and runner-up must register with the Association no later than July 1st in order to become eligible for the automatic World or National berth. The preceding year's champion and runner-up must participate in at least one USSSA sanctioned tournament during the current year in order to receive the automatic World or National tournament berth. The team rosters of the preceding year's championship and runner-up will become a qualified frozen roster when the team plays in its first USSSA sanctioned tournament of the current season.

(b) USSSA registered teams that qualify in State or Area Programs through whatever system is established.

(c) Registered host team from state in which tournament is being held.

(d) The highest finishing Women's team from each branch of the military represented at the All-Military Tournament will be extended a berth to participate in the Women's Class "A" World Tournament.

(e) The top four finishing teams in the Girl's Youth 18 and Under World Tournament will receive a berth to the Women's Class "A" World Tournament.

**Sec. 11.** All teams receiving berths to National or World Tournaments must play in their home state's State tournament provided such a State tournament is held. Failure to play in the State Tournament, if held, will result in forfeiture of the National or World berth. This section is considered as optional. A State Director has the option of using or not using this regulation.

**Sec. 12.** No team will be allowed to compete in a National or World tournament unless they are registered with the Association.

**Sec. 13.** All entry forms and team rosters of teams entering National or World tournaments must be approved by applicable State Directors. If a state does not have a State Director, then such approval can be given by the a Vice President. A properly completed letter of transmittal form must accompany each entry fee and entry form for National or World Tournaments. State Directors may not issue a letter of transmittal for teams from another state.

**Sec. 14.** When a team that has qualified to compete in a National or World Tournament for some legitimate reason cannot compete, the State or Area Director may select the next team in line to take their place or may select a substitute plan to award the berth.

**Sec. 15.** (a) The winner of all Men's and Women's National or World Tournaments, with the exception of the Men's "B" National Tournaments with fewer than 25 teams, will automatically be required to compete the following year in the next highest classification. Teams affected by this rule shall receive an automatic berth to their respective National, or World Tournament, as applicable, according to their new higher classification.

➔(b) The winner of the Men's Class "A" World Tournament will receive an automatic berth to the Men's Major World Series the following year provided the team plays in at least two Major NIT's.

(c) The winner of the Masters "AAA" Division will be required to compete the following year in the Masters Major Division.

(d) The winner and runner-up of the Mixed "B" World Tournament must compete the following year in the Mixed "A" Division and both will receive a berth to the Mixed "A" World Series providing they play in at least one Mixed NIT or Mixed National Tournament. The top six finishing teams in the Mixed "C" World Tournament must compete the following year in the Mixed "B" and will receive a World Tournament berth. The top six finishing "D" teams in the Mixed "D" World must compete the following year in the Mixed "C" and will receive a World Tournament berth. Teams that fall under this rule must compete in their respective State Tournament if one is provided.

(e) All Men's "B," "C," "D," and "E" and Women's "B," "C," and "D" teams who receive a berth to the World Tournament must participate in the appropriate National Tournament Labor Day weekend. Failure to play will result in the forfeiture of the berth. Teams may be exempt from participating in the National Tournament with written permission from the appropriate Executive Vice President and Vice President.

(f) The winner of the 16-Inch Class "A" World Tournament must compete the following year in the 16-Inch Major Division.

(g) The top six finishing teams in the Recreational Division of the Black American World Tournaments must compete the following year in the Competitive Division of the Black American Programs.

(h) The top 3 finishing teams in the Recreation Division of the Hispanic World Tournament must compete the following year in the Competitive Division of the Hispanic Program.

(i) Beginning with the 2004 World Tournaments, the top 10 percent of the finishing teams in the Men's Class "B," "C," "D," and "E" World Tournaments must compete the following year in a higher classification. **NOTE:** This includes teams that are tied with teams finishing in the top 10 percent in order of their finish. All percentages are rounded up.

(j) The top 12 finishing teams in the 2003 Men's Class "E" World Tournament must compete the following year in a higher classification.

(k) Paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), and (j) also apply to teams that change their team name or sponsorship.

(l) The winner of each Black American National Invitational Tournament shall receive a paid World Tournament berth.

(m) Any Women's state champion outside the continental U.S. will receive a direct berth to their World Tournament. They will have the option of playing in the National Tournament.

(n) Any team that wins a Men's Class "B," "C," or "D" NIT with 25 or more teams that has a minimum of 13 teams of that classification at the time of the tournament will have to compete in a higher classification the next season.

**Sec. 16.** No change to a team's roster will be allowed after the team has begun play in its first game during a tournament.

**Sec. 17.** A deadline for accepting entries in National or World Tournaments shall be set by the Tournament Director and approved by the Executive Director or an Executive Vice President.

**Sec. 18.** National and World Tournaments shall be scheduled to provide each team at least two games of participation. Exception: All Masters 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75 and Over NIT's and World Tournaments shall guarantee each team four games of participation. All men's and women's seniors World tournament play will include two seeding games that will seed the teams into a double-elimination bracket. This can be changed at the site of the tournament by the Tournament Director after the starting date of the tournament has begun; and it is determined that it would be feasible to attempt to continue on the double-loss play due to weather conditions or other acts of God. A substitute plan will be decided at that time keeping in mind what would be best for out of town teams. Note: This substitute plan may involve using the One-Pitch Rule as specified in Rule 17, Sec. 2. in the USSSA Rule Book. The Boys and Girls Youth World Series shall guarantee each team four games. Each team will have a two game minimum in pool play followed by a double elimination tournament with seeding based on the pool play games.

**Sec. 19.** It shall be mandatory that the following awards be presented at all National or World Tournaments (excluding Men's World Series and any National Invitational Tournaments):

(a) Championship Team Award

(b) Second Place Team Award to runner-up

(c) Third Place Team Award

(d) Fourth Place Team Award

(e) Individual Awards to each member and manager of the first and second place teams. Third place individual awards must be awarded in the Youth Program events.

(f) Home Run Award to individual hitting most home runs. (This rule applies only to those tournaments that allow home run hitters). (Note: Does not apply to 16-Inch and 60, 65, 70, 75 and Over Master's Senior Programs).

(g) Suitable award to outstanding defensive player. (Note: In Mixed tournaments Outstanding Defensive Player Award shall be awarded to both a male and female player).

(h) Suitable award to the outstanding offensive player. (Note: In Mixed tournaments Outstanding Offensive Player Award shall be awarded to both a male and a female player).

(i) Most Valuable Player Award. (This shall be called the Ray C. Ernst MVP Award in the Men's Class "A" World Tournament; the Fred Schlueter, Jr., MVP Award in the Women's World Series; the Randy Smith MVP Award in the Women's "B" World Tournament; the Al White MVP Award in the Competitive Division of the Black American World Tournament; the Dick Doherty MVP Award in the **Military** World Tournament Varsity "A" Division; the Owen B. Shacket MVP Award in the Men's Class "A" Church World Tournament; the Stan Kutcher MVP Award in the Mixed World Series; **and the Andy Lujan MVP Award in the Men's Competitive Division of the Hispanic World Tournament.** (Note: In Mixed Tournaments, a MVP Award shall be given to both a male and female player).

(j) A minimum of 15 suitable awards will be given to players on the All-Tournament team, plus one such award for the manager selected to the All-Tournament team. (Note: In Mixed Tournaments, an equal number of All-Tournament awards shall be given to males and females (i.e., 8 each).

(k) In the **Military** Program, no varsity player may receive a specialty award on an intramural team.

(l) All awards, where applicable, must bear the name of USSSA or the USSSA National Logo and must identify the specific event.

(m) All awards will be approved by the State Director of the host state.

**Sec. 20.** The Association shall reserve the right to operate a souvenir booth at any National or World Tournament. All profits realized from the operation of such a booth shall go to the Association.

**Sec. 21.** All National Invitational Tournaments that award National or World berths must be held prior to August 20th of each season. Mixed National Invitational Tournaments that award world berths must be completed no later than 10 days prior to the Mixed World Tournament.

**Sec. 22.** Teams that qualify for a National or World berth prior to June 1st must submit their entry fee for the National or World tournament by June 1st. Teams that qualify after June 1st must submit their entry fee within two weeks after receiving their berth. The entry fee must be paid to the State Director. In the event the state has no State Director, then the entry fee may be paid to an Executive Vice President. In the event that the entry fee is not submitted by the deadline, then the team will forfeit their berth and, it will be awarded to the next finishing team from the tournament where the berth was originally awarded.

**Sec. 23.** A team must participate in the highest National or World Tournament in which it wins a berth. EXCEPTION: this excludes the Men's Class "B," "C," "D," and "E" Programs if the team has previously qualified for its respective National or World tournament.

**Sec. 24.** States may not conduct a tournament of the same classifications, on the same days, within a 400 mile radius of a National Invitational Tournament if it is open to teams outside of its own State. This does not apply to Men's "B," "C," and "D" National Invitational Tournaments.

(a) Any such tournament in violation of this rule shall not be considered sanctioned by the Association and the awarding of any advancement berth will not be honored.

(b) Directors in violation of this rule shall be subject to sanction by the Association.

**Sec. 25.** Teams reaching the final four positions in a National, National Invitational, or World Tournament that arbitrarily forfeits their next game shall be considered as withdrawing from the tournament and shall be placed last in the standings; and will not be eligible for any awards, sponsor travel expense allocation, national ranking points or berths that were intended to be given in that particular tournament. The scheduled opponent shall be credited with a victory and be advanced immediately on the tournament bracket.

**Sec. 26.** Players, coaches, and managers participating in National, World, or World Series Tournaments cannot be charged any additional fees to gain admission to said playing site. Coaches and Managers in Youth World Tournaments and Youth NIT's are limited to three passes. Players, Coaches, and Managers participating in selected National Invitational tournaments may be charged admission fees with the joint permission of the respective Assistant Executive Director and Vice President.

## **ARTICLE VI - WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY OFF**

**Sec. 1.** In the event the Association holds a World Series Championship play-off to determine a true World Champion then it shall be the duty of the Association's Board of Directors to establish all rules and procedures to govern such an event. Finalizing and announcing plans to hold such an event should be made at the Annual Meeting of the Association.

**Sec. 2.** Any Men's teams, with the exception of teams that have nine or more players on their roster whose names appear on the Major Players List, that qualifies for the World Series will be allowed to strengthen their team by adding three additional players to their roster. These World Series additions can only be made during the period of

one week following Labor Day. A manager may release up to three players in order to make room for the add-ons. Maximum number of players shall still remain at 20. Such add-ons must have played for USSSA registered team during the current season.

**Sec. 3.** When a team qualifies for the World Series, its roster must be forwarded from the Tournament Director to the USSSA National Headquarters within 72 hours. Any roster changes thereafter will be governed by National Headquarters in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws.

**Sec. 4.** Any team that qualifies for the World Series must confirm their entry into the World Series by signing a letter of intent. The signed letter of intent must be returned to the USSSA Executive Director by a date specified by the Executive Director.

## **ARTICLE VII - UMPIRE APPAREL**

**Sec. 1.** The official standard umpire uniform for sanctioned play includes licensed and approved products which allow for freedom of movement. The official uniform shall consist of:

- (a) Approved licensed red pullover shirt. If a T-shirt is to be worn under the umpire shirt, it must be short sleeved and white in color.
- (b) Adjustable long-visor, black cap with a red bill. The cap will include the USSSA embroidery on the cap and the official licensed label inside.
- (c) Long black or grey pants with black socks.
- (d) Licensed black or grey shorts with official emblem. White over-the-calf tube socks with two red stripes and USSSA identification or short ankle socks with one red stripe and USSSA identification are mandatory when wearing shorts.
- (e) Approved licensed red windbreaker jacket, or v-neck pullover may be worn as outside apparel.
- (f) Black ball bag. When ball bags are necessary, only the Plate Umpire is required to wear one.
- (g) Black belt.
- (h) Black polished shoes and black shoelaces.

NOTE: If more than one Umpire is used per game, they must be dressed alike.

**Sec. 2.** The Official National Umpire's clinic emblem, if worn, must be on the left sleeve and one inch below the shoulder seam. The licensed USSSA pullover shirt has the USSSA emblem on the left breast.

**Sec. 3.** Pant lengths may be either of short or long length, and WITH BELT LOOPS. The length will, for the most part, depend on the climate but it must be standardized by local option or Tournament adoption.

## **ARTICLE VIII - OFFICIAL PLAYING RULES**

**Sec. 1.** The **National Slow Pitch Umpire-In-Chief** of the USSSA softball shall serve as the chairman of the Playing Rules Committee and the Playing Rules interpreter of the USSSA softball program.

**Sec. 2.** (a) The Official Playing Rules Committee of the USSSA Slow Pitch Softball shall consist of the **National Slow Pitch Umpire-In-Chief and all Assistant National Slow Pitch Umpires-In-Chief.**

(b) Each member of the Playing Rules committee shall be reimbursed for the cost of their round trip travel fare from their home to the site of the Annual National Meeting. Each Playing Rules Committee member shall also be

reimbursed for their lodging expenses during the dates of the National Meeting. Such reimbursement does not include any meal expenses.

**Sec. 3.** It shall be a responsibility of the Playing Rules Committee to make recommendations for changes in the playing rules of the Association. Any eligible voting delegate may submit a rule change. All changes in playing rules must have the approval of the USSSA Softball National Committee and the USSSA softball voting delegates present at the Annual National Meeting of the Association. EXCEPTION: An emergency change in the playing rules may be made by a three-fourths majority vote of the eligible voting members at such times as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors. Rules approved shall be effective immediately.

**Sec. 4.** Playing rule changes may be submitted either September 1st or at the National Meeting. Playing rule changes submitted prior to the National Meeting must be submitted to the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall then provide each voting delegate with properly submitted rule changes at least 30 days prior to the National Meeting. Playing rule changes submitted prior to the National Meeting shall require a majority vote of the eligible voting delegates. Playing rule changes submitted at the National Meeting shall require a three-fourths vote of the eligible voting delegates.

**Sec. 5.** The Association's Official Rule Book shall be used in all games played under the jurisdiction and administration of the Association.

**Sec. 6.** Any special ground rules believed necessary shall be prepared in written form and made available to all participants, i.e., umpires, teams, scorekeepers, sports writers, announcers, and other persons who are a part of the tournament management. These adopted rules will be considered in the same manner as the rules in the Rule Book.

**Sec. 7.** Protests will be accepted and decided only in the manner described in the appropriate section of playing rules.

## ARTICLE IX –UMPIRES

**Sec. 1.** An Assistant National Slow Pitch Umpire-In-Chief shall be appointed on an as needed basis in the softball program. Each Assistant National Slow Pitch Umpire-In-Chief shall be a member of the Slow Pitch Softball National Playing Rules Committee; he shall assist the National Umpire-In-Chief in answering inquiries pertaining to rule interpretations. He shall, upon request, conduct Umpire's clinics. He shall take an active part in planning and assisting the National Umpire-In-Chief in conducting National Umpire Clinics. He shall assist the National Umpire-In-Chief in the selection of out-of-state Umpires to officiate in National and World Tournaments.

**Sec. 2.** The Assistant National Slow Pitch Umpires-In-Chief shall be recommended by the National Slow Pitch Umpire-In-Chief and approved by the Board of Directors.

**Sec. 3.** An Assistant National Slow Pitch Umpire-In-Chief may be allowed to hold other positions within the Association provided such positions do not interfere in any way with performing the duties of Assistant National Slow Pitch Umpire-In-Chief.

**Sec. 4.** An Assistant National Slow Pitch Umpire-In-Chief may be terminated from his position, at any time, for failure to perform his duties, insubordination, or other justifiable reasons by action taken by the National Slow Pitch Umpire-In-Chief and the Board of Directors