



The Game

Rules

USSSA UMPIRE CLINIC



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The Game – Re-Entry Rule

- Starting players may be taken out of the game for a substitute and re-enter the game.
 - **Substitutes may not re-enter the game once they are removed/substituted for the original starter or a substitute player.**
 - There are penalties for announced substitutions. There are no parameters for discovery of an unannounced substitute player.
 - GSL has its own re-entry rules.
- **Only the SUBSTITUTES re-entering is different from ASA/USA. This rule usually doesn't apply to our tournaments or league play.**



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The Game

Unannounced or Unreported Substitutes

- **Minor difference from ASA/USA. It's still important that all substitutes be reported to the plate umpire.**

- **Unannounced/unreported substitutes are EJECTED upon discovery.**
- Any play/action (offensively or defensively) by the unreported sub is nullified if the discovery happens before a pitch to the next batter (or similar conditions for a proper appeal exist).
- Offensively – unannounced batter is declared out, any out made by the defense stands, and all runners, not put out, return to base occupied when unannounced sub entered.
- Defensively – play is nullified, batter returned to batter's box no count, all runners advance one base.



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Pace of Play - 5 Second Rule

- A BALL IS CALLED BY THE UMPIRE on each pitch not swung at by batter if:
- A pitched ball is not released within 5 seconds from the time the pitcher has the ball, and the batter has taken his position in the batter's box.
- **The pitched ball must be released within 5 seconds from the time the pitcher has the ball, and the batter has taken his position in the batter's box. From this point, the umpire shall not give a call or signal for "time" unless something unusual occurs.**



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Pace of Play – 10 Second Rule

- The important note is that “Time” must be requested by the batter AND be granted or the ball is live and the 5-second pitch rule applies.
- The umpire shall not give a call or signal for “TIME” when a batter steps out of position after a pitcher has started his delivery motions.
- EFFECT: If the pitcher pitches, the umpire shall call “STRIKE” on each such pitch.
- The batter may take his proper position after any such pitch (within 10 seconds) and regular ball and strike count shall continue.
- A STRIKE IS CALLED BY THE UMPIRE:
- When the batter delays entering the batter’s box after the umpire signals play ball. After 10 seconds the umpire shall declare dead ball and a strike shall be called on the batter



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Pitching –

- Sec. 5. TYPE OF PITCH PERMITTED. A. The ball must be pitched in a definite underhanded motion at slow speed. B. **The pitched ball must arc at least 3 feet after leaving the pitcher's hand and before it passes any part of home plate.** C. **The pitched ball shall not rise higher than 10 feet above the ground.** EFFECT Sec. 5. A-C. The speed of the pitch and height of the pitched ball are left entirely to the judgment of the umpire (NOTE: For sake of uniformity in decisions, any doubtful pitch should be ruled as an unfairly delivered pitch). The umpire shall warn a pitcher who delivers a pitch with EXCESSIVE SPEED that repeating such EXCESSIVE SPEED PITCH will cause the pitcher's removal from the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game. A pitch that does not arc the full 3 feet as required (flat level pitch) may not be an EXCESSIVE SPEED PITCH, but merely an unfairly delivered pitch.



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Pitching

- Distance 50'
- Ball must have minimum 3' arc from release/hand and maximum 10' arc from the ground.
- No "Pitching Area", must have one foot in contact with pitcher's plate while pitch is released.
- Non-Pivot foot has no restrictions and pivot foot may be changed any number of times before 5 seconds elapse.
- No restriction on release of ball. Must be underhand motion.
- Pitcher may hold or grip ball in any manner.
- Pitcher must face home plate upon release of ball.
- No restrictions on pump fakes, jukes or foot movements, flips, spins etc.

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Pitching – Unfairly Delivered

- The important note is that “Illegal Pitch” is not called during the pitch. It’s only acknowledged if the pitch is NOT swung at and is dead.
- An Unfairly Delivered Pitch is never signaled or vocalized by USSSA Umpires until it is a DEAD BALL
- A call of “BALL” is required after each pitch not swung at by the batter, has not landed in foul territory, is not in the USSSA strike zone, is a “Quick Return” pitch, or one that is unfairly delivered
- Realizing that the pitcher does not fool very many batters, pitchers shall not be handicapped by technicalities, when they do develop a new technique or delivery that, will add to the pleasure and appeal to the spectators, if the pitcher adheres to the basic pitching rules



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Pitching – Pitcher's Legal Motions

- Pitcher may make any motions (unless vulgar or unsportsmanlike) before 5 seconds has elapsed or the ball is released to the batter.
- Pitch must be a definite underhand motion.
- **Ball may be released in front of pitcher's body, behind back, between legs, from kneeling position etc.**
- Ball must be delivered at a slow speed.
- After the release of the pitch, there are no restrictions on pitcher's subsequent movements or the fielding positions he may assume as a defensive player.



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Batting

- **The batter shall assume a zero ball, zero strike count upon entering the batter's box.**
- **Batter walks on 3 balls and is out on 2 strikes.**
- Foul ball on strike 2 caught, batter out, ball is live.
- **A pitched ball that hits the ground in fair territory or the plate may be struck legally by the batter.**
- Any pitch that is not DEAD, that is swung at and missed by the batter, will be called a strike.
- Any non-strike pitch landing in foul territory shall be declared a Ball and the ball is DEAD.
- A foul tip becomes DEAD immediately



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Batting – Strike Zone

- **STRIKE ZONE** is that space directly above home plate that is not higher than the batter's highest shoulder, nor lower than the bottom of the batter's front knee, when the batter assumes his natural batting stance adjacent to home plate.
- Any part of the pitched ball that passes through this zone is a strike.
- **Ball must adhere to all pitching rules and arc at least 3' from the pitcher's hand upon release.**
- Ball must not exceed a 10' arc height measured from the ground.
- ** A pitched ball must land in foul territory to be called a "STRIKE"





The “Strike Zone” is only that part, or any part of the area, over home plate that is lower than the batter’s highest shoulder, or higher than the bottom of his front knee.

An umpire should not let the batter’s position, either in the front part, or the rear of the batter’s box, be of influence in calling strikes. Each pitch should be adjudged according to the height of any part of the ball as it is crossing only above or over any part of the home plate.

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Batting – Batter's Box

- **BATTER'S BOX** is the area within which the batter takes his position when it is his turn at bat.
- The batter's box shall be 6" from home plate, 5-1/2' long, extending 3' forward and 2-1/2' toward the rear, measured from the center corner of home plate., and shall be 3' wide, forming a rectangle of 5-1/2' by 3'. The lines marking the batter's box are part of the batter's box.
- **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 they contact the ball after not taking this "initial" position. DBO



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Batting – In/Out of Batter's Box

- Batter is considered to be in the box as long as their foot/feet are still touching the lines of the batter's box.
- As long as a batter has their foot completely in the box or touching the lines of the batter's box to begin their at bat, they will be judged as being, "Legally in the batter's box".
- The lines marking the batter's box are considered to be part of the batter's box.



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Baserunning – Stealing (In programs that allow stealing)

- There is no stealing or advancing of runners during a pitch or on any pitch not hit.
- **BASE STEALING OR ADVANCING IS NOT PERMITTED AS A RESULT OF ANY PITCHED BALL NOT BATTED.**
- Base runners must keep in contact with their base and may leave it ONLY when a pitched ball has reached or passed home plate, is batted or hits the ground.
- A runner that leaves the base before the pitched ball hits the ground, enters the home plate chamber will be called OUT and the ball will be DEAD. No runners may advance.



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Baserunning – Safety Base

- If the base runner uses the orange portion at any time after the first attempt at first base and is not in contact with the white portion, then they are considered to be off the base.
- **Baserunner must start on white base, starting on contrasting color base (orange) signifies runner being “off the base”.**
- Baserunner must use white base for any retouch, tag up.
- There are times when the defense dictates which bag is required to be touched.
- **There should be a warning or “preventive officiating” when implementing this rule as ASA/USA players may be used to starting off on the colored bag as a safety precaution.**



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Baserunning – Courtesy Runners

- COURTESY RUNNERS: One courtesy runner per inning (one time) may be used.
- The courtesy runner can be any player on the ROSTER. Once the courtesy runner occupies the base, the selected courtesy runner may not be exchanged for any other desired courtesy runner.
- **If the courtesy runner is still on base at the time her/his turn at bat comes up, that spot in the batting order will be an out.**

