

Summary of Changes in Eleventh Edition Playing Rules

Major Rule Changes

Rule 2 Sec 10. THE OFFICIAL BAT rewritten –

- Added 9 New Sections: 2.10.E1, 2.10.F, 2.10.G, 2.10.H, 2.10.I, 2.10.J, 2.10.K, 2.10.L, 2.10.M
- New USSSA Mark on its taper

Bat Standards

USSSA Softball Bat Marks and Grandfathering Rules

- Effective January 1, 2012
 - Have the new USSSA Mark on its taper OR
 - Have the old USSSA mark OR
 - Be a Wood Bat
- Eventually but not before January 1, 2013
 - Have the new USSSA Mark on its taper OR
 - Be a Wood Bat



Rule Changes

Rule 2.3 Altered Ball Penalty added.

Rule 2.9.B Glove lacing may be any color other than that of the ball. The manufacturer's logos are not considered a glove color.

Rule 2.10 Change the amount of bat safety grip down to a minimum of 8" from 10".

Rule 3 Altered Ball definition added

Rule 3 Altered Bat definition added

Rule 8.5. E. **Sec 5.** A batter-runner is awarded first base if:
Added E. hit by a thrown ball while legally advancing which incapacitated the batter-runner prior to reaching 1st base.

Editorial Changes

Rule 3 **FOUL TIP** added Note

Any batted ball that travels directly from the bat to any part of the catcher's body or equipment other than the hand(s) or glove/mitt, is a foul ball and dead. It is not a foul tip.

8.18.H NOTE 1 CHANGE from "runner closest to home to immediate trailing runner as follows:

If, in the judgment of the Umpire, this interference is an attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate trailing runner shall also be called out.

19.B.EXC.2. Double First Base Exceptions: The defense and batter runner can use either portion when:
Change 2. To on any force out attempt from the foul side of first base.

old 10.1 Move old 10.1 into 8.4.D and delete old section 10.1

old 10.2 Move old 10.2 into renumbered 10.2.D and delete old section 10.2

10.1. Ball becomes dead immediately when:

Added "batter" to: E. There is interference by batter, a runner or a retired runner.

10. Sec 2. It is a delayed dead ball when:

Deleted B. There is interference by a batter.

Summary of Changes in Eleventh Edition Playing Rules with Comments

Major Rule Changes

Rule 2 Sec 10. THE OFFICIAL BAT rewritten –

- Added 9 New Sections: 2.10.E1, 2.10.F, 2.10.G, 2.10.H, 2.10.I, 2.10.J, 2.10.K, 2.10.L, 2.10.M
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Bat Standards

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Bat manufacturers have the technology and have agreed to produce bats that will maintain the Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20 or show signs that the BPF currently exceeds the standard. It will also display signs that the bat has been altered. The length of the Grandfather period is being discussed.

Rule Changes

Rule 2.3 Altered Ball Penalty added.

Penalty is same as Altered Bat Penalty.

Rule 2.9.B Glove lacing may be any color other than that of the ball. The manufacturer's logos are not considered a glove color.

The manufacturer's logo should not be considered a color. Approximately 90% of the gloves/mitts have yellow on it. The logo does not confuse the batter or the plate umpire as a ball.

Rule 2 Sec 10 Change the amount of bat safety grip down to a minimum of 8" from 10".

This modification to our existing rule changes the amount of safety grip down to a minimum of 8" from the current 10". This change corrects the issue of some youth bats being made with 8 inches of safety grip for younger aged equipment.

Rule 3 Altered Ball definition added

Previously undefined

Rule 3 Altered Bat definition added

This adds a definition and is consistent with new bat standards

Rule 8.5. E. **Sec 5.** A batter-runner is awarded first base if:

Added E. hit by a thrown ball while legally advancing which incapacitated the batter-runner prior to reaching 1st base.

This change allows the batter-runner safe passage to 1st base in a case where the batter-runner running legally is hit by a thrown ball and injured/incapacitated prior to reaching 1st base. It was felt the defense should not be rewarded from such an action

Editorial Changes

Rule 3 **FOUL TIP** added Note

Any batted ball that travels directly from the bat to any part of the catcher's body or equipment other than the hand(s) or glove/mitt, is a foul ball and dead. It is not a foul tip.

This addition merely explicitly states the current interpretation

8.18.H NOTE 1 CHANGE from "runner closest to home to immediate trailing runner as follows:

If, in the judgment of the Umpire, this interference is an attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate trailing runner shall also be called out.

This change addresses the effect of the runner who is not out committing interference to prevent a double play. It is the standard interpretation.

19.B.EXC.2. Double First Base Exceptions: The defense and batter runner can use either portion when: Change 2. To on any force out attempt from the foul side of first base.

This rule addresses "An errant or missed throw" but does not address a muffed batted ball. This change extends the exception to all plays from foul ground

old 10.1 Move old 10.1 into 8.4.D and delete old section 10.1

Combines redundant sections

old 10.2 Move old 10.2 into renumbered 10.2.D and delete old section 10.2

Combines redundant sections

10.1. Ball becomes dead immediately when:

Added "batter" to: E. There is interference by batter, a runner or a retired runner.

Corrects section that should have changed when batter interference was changed to immediate dead ball.

10. Sec 2. It is a delayed dead ball when:

Deleted B. There is interference by a batter.

Corrects section that should have changed when batter interference was changed to immediate dead ball. Makes Rule consistent with 7.12 & 10.1.E (old 10.3.E)

CHANGES in 2012 Eleventh Edition Playing Rules

RULE 2. EQUIPMENT

Sec 9. GLOVES/MITTS

Gloves/mitts made of leather shall be worn by all fielders.

- B. The glove/mitt may be any combination of colors except the color of the game ball or optic. **Glove lacing may be any color other than that of the ball. The manufacturer's logos are not considered a glove color.** A gray, white or optic colored circle on the outside or inside of the glove/mitt that gives the appearance of a ball is illegal. A glove/mitt that is judged to be distracting by the Umpire is illegal.

Old: Glove lacing and manufacturer's logos may be any color other than that of the ball.

Sec 10. THE OFFICIAL BAT – Complete Rewrite follows at end.

Old: The safety grip shall be not less than 10 inches long

New: The safety grip shall be not less than 10 inches long for 32"-34" long bats and not less than 8" long for smaller bats

RULE 3. DEFINITIONS

Altered Bat Defined

ALTERED BALL is one which has had its physical structure changed in any way, including (but not limited to) balls that have been frozen, micro-waved, heated, melted, cooled, recovered, restitched, surface modified to be rougher or softer, etc.

Altered Bat Defined

ALTERED BAT is a bat that has had its physical structure changed, including, but not limited to:

1. The bat has had the surface of the barrel or the taper changed in any way such as by addition of graphics, painting, repainting, removal of bat material or paint by any means including but not limited to sandpapering or applying a solvent to the surface such as fingernail polish remover or by any other means.
2. The bat has had the plug or the knob removed/replaced or changed in any way.
3. The bat has had anything removed or added or inserted to the inside or outside of the bat other than tape at the handle or knob. Other examples of altering a bat would be changing or replacing manufacturers' markings or replacing the handle of a bat with a new handle.. Replacing the grip, adding tape or adding a build up to the handle is not considered altering a bat.
4. The bat has been subjected to pressure in a manner that exceeds that of striking the bat at game speed swing speed against a USSSA approved ball traveling at game speeds. Such pressure would include, but is not limited to, compressing the bat, rolling the bat, vicing the bat or hitting the bat against an object such as a tree or pole. The bat has in any other way had its on field performance improved by physically changing the bat (other than by hitting the bat at game condition swing speeds against a USSSA approved ball traveling at game condition speeds).

FLEX added The FLEX player is placed in the FLEX position, a non-batting position listed last in the lineup.

FOUL TIP added Note Any batted ball that travels directly from the bat to any part of the catcher's body or equipment other than the hand(s) or glove/mitt, is a foul ball and dead. It is not a foul tip.

RULE 8. BASE RUNNING

Sec 4. A batter becomes a batter runner ... when:

- D. A pitched ball, legal or illegal, hits the batter's person or clothing, provided the batter does not strike at the ball.
EXCEPTION: If the batter makes no effort to avoid being hit or if the Umpire calls the pitched ball a strike, the batter being hit by the ball is disregarded and the ball is dead. It is a strike or ball depending on location of the pitch.
NOTE: If a batter's loose garment, such as a shirt that is not buttoned is hit by a pitched ball, the batter is not entitled to first base.

MOVED THE FOLLOWING NOTES from 10.1

Note:

1. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter.
2. The batter's hands are not considered part of the bat.
3. If a batter swings and the ball hits his hands which send it into fair or foul territory, the ball is dead immediately; A strike is called on the batter; and if it is the third strike, the batter is out

Sec 5. A batter-runner is awarded first base if:

ADDED THE FOLLOWING

- E. hit by a thrown ball while legally advancing which incapacitated the batter-runner prior to reaching 1st base..

Sec 14. AWARDED BASES

C. Two bases:

3. If a live thrown ball (not by a pitcher from the pitcher's plate as in item D) goes into a stand for spectators, or a players' bench, or over or through or lodges in a fence.

DELETED "or throws" FROM THE FOLLOWING as unnecessary covered in 14.C.3

5. If the fielder intentionally carries ~~or throws~~ a live ball into dead-ball territory.

D. One base:

DELETED "or throws" FROM THE FOLLOWING as contradictory with 14.C.3

6. If the fielder unintentionally carries ~~or throws~~ a live ball into dead-ball territory.

Sec 18. Any runner is out when:

- H. Being put out is prevented by an illegal act by anyone connected with the team.

CHANGE NOTE FROM

NOTE 1: If, in the judgment of the Umpire, a runner interferes in any way and prevents a double play anywhere, two shall be declared out (the runner who interferes and the runner closest to home).

TO

NOTE 1 If, in the judgment of the Umpire, this interference is an attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, **the immediate trailing runner** shall also be called out.

Sec 19. Double First Base

The Double First Base shall consist of a base in fair territory that is white in color and a base in foul territory that is colored.

- B. Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the colored portion.

Exceptions: The defense and batter runner can use either portion when:

CHANGE FROM

2. An errant or missed throw pulls the defensive player into foul ground.

TO INCLUDE ALSO A MUFFED HIT BALL – CHANGE TO

2. on any force out attempt from the foul side of first base.

RULE 10. DEAD BALL - SUSPENSION OF PLAY

Move old 10.1 into 8.4.D and delete section

Move old 10.2 into renumbered 10.2.D and delete section

NEW Sec 1 (old Sec 3). Ball becomes dead immediately when:

ADD "batter" to following paragraph" to agree with 7.12

- E. There is interference by **a batter**, a runner or a retired runner.

NEW Sec 2 (old Sec 4). It is a delayed dead ball when:

DELETE B. – rule was modified see 7.12 & 10.1.E above

- B. There is interference by a batter.

NEW C (old D). The Umpire interferes with catcher who is attempting to throw.

Move from old 10.2 the effect

EFFECT: If the runner is not out, he is returned to the last base attained before the interference occurred.

RULE 2. EQUIPMENT

Sec. 10. THE OFFICIAL BAT shall be round in cross section, straight in length and measure not more than 34 inches long, including tape or other grip additions to the bat, shall have a knob at the end of its handle, and not more than 2-1/4 inches in diameter at its largest part. Its weight shall not exceed 31-ounces, including tape or grip addition to the bat. The bat shall have a grip of tape or some other material to facilitate holding the bat during the batter's swing. The grip shall be not less than 10 inches long for 32"-34" long bats and not less than 8" long for smaller bats, nor extend to touch the taper or barrel of the bat. All key graphics, including USSSA and BPF markings, must be permanent and cannot be applied as decals or by any other method that would allow the key graphics to be easily removed or added to the bat.

A. Material. THE BAT may be made of hard wood of one piece, or laminated from sections of hard wood bonded together with adhesive in such a way that the grain directions of all the pieces are essentially parallel to the length of the bat. THE BAT may also be made of aluminum or other metals, fiberglass, graphite or composite materials.

B. Construction. The bat may be made in pieces from different materials but must have a closed barrel end, a taper, a handle and a taper. The bat may be modular with interchangeable parts, subject to additional safety and tampering requirements as set forth in the standard USSSA Bat Licensing Agreement. The knob portion must be welded or mechanically attached to the bat. Only USSSA approved bats, USSSA approved weighted bats or USSSA approved bat weight attachments, may be used by the on deck batter while loosening up on the field.

C. Official Softball. Authorized bat manufacturers shall mark their products with the words "Official Softball".

D. Other Criteria for Legal USSSA Bats. The performance standard for all non-wooden bats will be a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20, or less under the ASTM BPF test as applied under the standard USSSA Bat License Agreement. Only bats on the published list and marked "USSSA BPF 1.20" or "1.20 BPF USSSA" are legal in USSSA sanctioned play. Wood bats made on the approved USSSA bat manufacturer list shall be legal without regard to this section.

E. Altered Bat Director Inspection and Suspension. A USSSA Director may at any time ask to inspect a bat that has been brought into the location of a USSSA sanctioned event or any other USSSA facility. The owner and/or user may either:

1. Withhold the bat from inspection and accept an immediate two year (automatic life for second time offenders under EI and/or E) suspension from USSSA sanctioned activities with no right to appeal; or,
2. Allow the Director to inspect the bat and reach a conclusion as to whether or not the bat might be altered.

EI. Altered Bat Determination by Altered Bat Committee Chairman or Manufacturer. If, after making the inspection of a potential altered bat, the Director in his discretion decides that the bat might be an altered bat, the suspected offending owner and/or user and may either:

1. Withhold the bat from further examination by the USSSA Altered Bat Committee Chairman or Manufacturer of the bat and accept an immediate two year (up to life for second time offenders under sections E and/or EI) suspension from USSSA sanctioned activities with no right to appeal; or
2. Allow the Director to send the bat to the USSSA Altered Bat Committee Chairman and/or Manufacturer of the bat for a determination as to whether or not the bat is altered. If the Manufacturer or the USSSA Altered Bat Committee Chairman determines that the bat has been altered, the Altered Bat Committee Chairman in consultation with the Director who inspected the bat at the USSSA facility may suspend a first time offender for up to five (5) years from USSSA play. For a second time offender under E and/or EI, any such suspension will be for to life.

F. Ownership and Knowledge of Bat Being Altered. The responsibility for knowing whether a bat is altered is that of the users and the owner of the bat. If an individual uses an altered bat in USSSA sanctioned play or is the owner of an altered bat that is brought into a USSSA facility, the suspensions under this Rule 2, Section 1 will be imposed without regard to what the individual actually knew about the altered bat. An individual must know that his bat is not an altered bat, if he brings it into a USSA facility or used it in a USSSA sanctioned activity. If not, the individual can be suspended from USSSA activities for using or owning an altered bat. The fact that the individual did not know that the bat was altered is not a factor in imposing the suspension. The only question is whether the bat is altered or

whether the owner/user has refused to let the bat be examined to determine if it is altered. After the Director, Altered Bat Committee and Manufacturer examination of a bat to determine if it is altered have all been completed, or upon the decision of the owner/user to not allow further inspection of the bat under E or EI, above, the bat shall be returned to the owner. If no one claims to be the owner, USSSA shall retain the bat. Once the bat has been returned to the owner, no appeal can be made with respect to whether the bat is altered or not.

G. Investigation Cooperation. Any coach, manager, player or other person who fails to cooperate in the investigation by USSSA of a potential or actual altered bat shall be subject to an unsportsmanlike conduct suspension. A manager or coach of a team that has more than one of his team's bats determined to be altered (or not allowed to be inspected upon request for an altered bat inspection under E and/or EI, above) shall be subject to an unsportsmanlike conduct suspension.

H. Awards and Coach Suspensions If an owner/user chooses to submit a suspected altered bat to the USSSA Altered Bat Committee or the Manufacturer no awards will be given to the team until the bat is determined not to be altered. If the bat is found to be altered, no awards or berth will be given and the team will be placed last in the standings and the listed manager and coaches may be suspended for unsportsmanlike conduct.

I. Participation in, Profits from, or Encouraging the Altering of USSSA Marked Bats. Any one who participates in, profits from, or encourages the altering of USSSA marked bats shall be suspended indefinitely from all USSSA activities, until the offending party has satisfied all requests of the Altered Bat Committee with respect to his altered bat activities including but not limited to publicly swearing under penalties of perjury to never again participate in, profit from, or encourage the altering of USSSA marked bats. Violation of such an oath shall result in permanent suspension from all USSSA activities.

J. Compression Testing. Failure of a USSSA approved compression testing device test shall result in the offending bat being removed from play for the duration of the tournament or league game, not longer without the permission of the owner/user—such as in the case of an allowed USSSA altered bat determination under section EI. Multiple failures of such USSSA compression testing may in the discretion of USSSA be viewed as unsportsmanlike conduct of the owner/user, coaches, manager and team.

K. Custom Bats. No approved manufacturer may make a custom USSSA bat for a player or a team. All USSSA marked bats made by a USSSA approved manufacturer must be available to the public for purchase. Individualized graphics (such as a team name, different color, player name or number only changes for a team or player), however, do not constitute custom bats for purposes of this section K.

L. Worn/Abused/Damaged/Foreign Substance Bats Not Allowed in USSSA Sanctioned Play.

1. No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if it is damaged in any way. Damaged bats include those with damage to the knob or end cap, those which have loose knobs or end caps, and those with cracks or dents in the bat material. For example, if the end cap is in any way loose or appears damaged, the bat should be removed from play for being a damaged bat. If an end plug has come out or the knob has come off, the only way that such bat is legal in USSSA play, is if the knob or end cap is replaced by the manufacturer. Replacement by anyone else results in an altered bat with potential suspension for the owner/user of the bat.

2. No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if any of the graphics of the bat have worn off. For example, even if the only graphics that have worn off are not Key Graphic Information and are only items such as the patent no., a manufacturer logo, or the approval mark of another association, the bat should be removed from play for being too worn.

3. No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if the paint has been worn through and the actual bat material is showing. For example, if at the end of the barrel next to the taper where there are no graphics the bat paint is worn off and the underlying bat material is exposed, that bat should be removed from play for being too worn.

4. No bat is legal for USSSA sanctioned play, if there is a foreign substance on the barrel or taper of a baseball or softball bat. Foreign substances included among other substances, pine tar, stick-em type products and even dirt or mud, but only if the substance adds to the thickness of the barrel or covers Key Graphic Information such as the USSSA 1.20 BPF mark, the serial number of the bat, the model or manufacturer name, official softball, etc.. Players are responsible for their equipment and must clean such substances off of their bats so that the substance does not add to the thickness of the bat or obscure any Key Graphics Information about the bat. For example,

while bats will surely get dirt on them under normal use and may have pine tar added to the grip, if the dirt or pine tar obscures Key Graphic Information or adds to the thickness of the bat, such bats cannot be used in USSSA play until the dirt or pine tar has been removed to the extent necessary to make all such Key Graphic Information readable and the bat not have increased thickness. If Key Graphic Information about a bat cannot be read, the bat should not be used in USSSA play.

5. If any removed bat under these section L rules is brought back into play at any USSSA sanctioned event at any time, the owner and user of such bat may be suspended for up to one year for unsportsmanlike conduct. And if the foreign substance or the wear/abuse/damage is apparent enough that the batter should have been aware of it, the batter may be so suspended for bringing such a bat into the batters box without having been warned in advance. Players are responsible for their equipment and must not use equipment that is even potentially illegal for use in USSSA sanctioned play.
6. In addition to the player being suspended for unsportsmanlike conduct, coaches of youth teams may also be so suspended when their players attempt to bat with such bats. Also, coaches of adult teams which have multiple offenses under this rule may also be so suspended for failing to have his team follow USSSA equipment rules. Please be reminded that unsportsmanlike conduct can result in a game or tournament suspension in the discretion of the umpire or tournament director and up to a year suspension in the discretion of the state director.

M. Youth Player Altered Bats. The parents or legal guardians of a youth player suspended under section E and/or EI shall be suspended for life from all USSSA sanctioned activities. As such, the player even after his suspension has ended under E and/or EI. Can not participate in USSSA sanctioned activities until the player is 18 years old. In addition to any other penalties under this rule 2.1, any coach or manager of a youth team that has more than one suspension imposed under sections E and/or EI. will be suspended from all USSSA activities for life.