

# TRIPLE CREEK COMPLEX USSSA PLAYING RULES

All USSSA Tournament games played at Triple Creek Complex will be played in accordance with the current United States Specialty Sports Association Official Baseball National By-Laws & Rules. This annotated version of the playing rules is provided by Triple Creek Complex to highlight specific areas with which coaches and umpires should be familiar.

## Bats

The maximum diameter shall not exceed two and three fourths (2 3/4) inches and the maximum length shall not exceed thirty-six (36) inches. The bat shall be constructed of wood, aluminum, or any other material or combination of materials unless such materials or combinations of materials are specifically disapproved by USSSA. Any material to improve the grip may be used for a distance not to exceed eighteen (18) inches from the handle end. Any such material or substance, which extends past the eighteen (18) inch limitation, shall cause the bat to be removed from the game.

**Note:** If the umpire discovers that the bat does not conform to USSSA Rule 8.01.E until a time during or after which the bat has been used in play, it shall not be grounds for declaring the batter out, or ejection from the game.

All bats for scholastic divisions 15U – 18U must conform to the NFHS (National Federation of High School Association) bat limitations including a length to weight ratio no greater than negative three (-3) ounces.

## Shoes

Shoes with pointed spikes similar to golf or track shoes shall not be worn in any division of play.

In age divisions 4U – 12U, non-metal cleats must be worn.

In age divisions 13U – 18U, traditional metal baseball spikes may be worn.

## Protective Equipment

The catcher shall wear all appropriate protective gear including a catcher's helmet with facemask and either a built in extended throat guard or a separately attached throat guard, chest protector, shin and / or leg guards, and protective cup.

**Note:** In age divisions 4U – 12U, the catcher's helmet shall fully cover both ears.

All offensive players shall use a double ear-flap batting helmet whenever at bat, on deck, on base or any other time outside of the dugout and the ball is live and in play. All bat / ball boys must wear a double earflap batting helmet when outside the dugout.

**Note:** If the umpire observes any violation of these rules, he shall direct the violation to be corrected. If the violation is not immediately corrected, in the umpire's judgment, the umpire shall eject the offender from the game.

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## Game Preliminaries

A flip of a coin between the two teams shall determine the home team for each pool play game, championship game and "if" game. The highest seeded team will be the home team for bracket play games.

## Time Limits

The following time limits will apply to all tournament games:

8U and below:	1:15
9U - 12U:	1:30
13U – 14U:	1:45
15U and above:	1:50

**Note:** There will be no time limit on Championship Games.

## Line-ups

Teams may bat a nine (9) player line-up, ten (10) player line-up using an Extra Hitter (EH) or continuous line-up of all present, eligible, uniformed players. Such line-up must be declared before the start of the game and used the entire game.

If a team uses a line-up that contains substitute players, all starting players may be removed and re-enter the game once, but must re-enter in their original position in the batting order. Non-starters are not allowed to re-enter. When a starter re-enters, the player in the starter's batting position in the batting order must be removed from the game and is ineligible for the remainder of the game.

If a team uses a line-up that contains ten (10) players, the player in the Extra Hitter position, while not actually playing a defensive position, will be treated as such for substitution purposes. When using the Extra Hitter, all players in the line-up may move freely in defensive positions with the exception of the pitching position.

If a team uses a continuous line-up, all players other than the nine (9) defensive position players are Extra Hitters and may move freely in defensive positions with the exception of the pitching position.

**Note:** Any player(s) arriving after the game has begun, shall be added to the bottom of the batting line-up.

In scholastic divisions 15U – 18U, if the Extra Hitter (EH) is not utilized, then the Designated Hitter (DH) may be utilized in accordance with the NFHS (National Federation of High School Association) baseball rules.

A Designated Hitter may be (not mandatory) selected for any one starting player and all subsequent substitutes for that player in the game.

A starting defensive player cannot be listed as the Designated Hitter in the starting line-up.

A Designated Hitter for said player shall be selected prior to the start of the game, and his name shall be included on the line-up.

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Failure to declare a Designated Hitter prior to the game precludes the use of a DH in the game.

If a pinch hitter or pinch runner for the Designated Hitter is used, that player becomes the new DH.

The player who was the Designated Hitter may re-enter, provided that player is still eligible to re-enter the game.

A Designated Hitter and the player for whom the DH is batting are locked into the batting order. No multiple substitutions may be made that will alter the batting order.

The role of the Designated Hitter is terminated for the remainder of the game when:

The defensive player, or any previous defensive player for whom the Designated Hitter batted, subsequently bats, pinch-hits, or runs for the DH; or,

The Designated Hitter or any previous DH assumes a defensive position.

Teams may play an official game with an eight (8) player line-up. If a team plays with an eight (8) player line-up, an out shall be declared for the ninth (9th) position in the batting line-up each turn at bat.

**Note:** A ninth (9th) player and all subsequent players may be added to the bottom of the batting line-up as soon as they become available.

A team may continue a game with a minimum of eight (8) eligible players. **A player who has left a game for any reason cannot return to the game.**

If the player leaving the game is a runner and no legal substitutes are available, the runner is declared out.

**Exception:** If the player is leaving the game for Communicable Disease Procedure reasons, the player whom recorded the previous out assumes the runners position on base.

When a player who has left the game is scheduled to bat and no legal substitutes are available, an out shall be declared for each turn at bat.

**Exception:** If the player left the game for Communicable Disease Procedure reasons, the players turn in the batting order shall be omitted for the remainder of the game without penalty.

### Position of Fielders

When the ball is put in play at the start of, or during a game, all fielders other than the catcher shall be on fair territory. This means that both feet must be on fair territory. A foot that is touching a foul line is considered to be in fair territory. **Violation of this rule is not a balk.**

**Penalty:** The offensive team will have the choice of taking the result of any play, or having the play nullified if it benefited the defense.

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## Run Rules

An imposed Mercy (Run) Rule shall be used to complete a regulation game when one team's margin of lead is greater than or equal to the listed run differential in the corresponding inning.

**Six (6) Inning Games:** 15 after 3, 8 after 4  
**Seven (7) Inning Games:** 15 after 3, 12 after 4, 8 after 5

## Intentional Walk

An Intentional Walk may be issued upon announcement from either the pitcher or catcher. The four (4) pitches need not be thrown.

**Note:** An Intentional Walk may be issued at any point in the count to the batter. "Time" will be called by the umpire prior to the award and play will not resume until after the batter has reached first base.

## Courtesy Runners

At any time, the offensive team may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and catcher of record the previous inning on defense.

The courtesy runner must be a player not presently in the line-up.

If no players not presently in the line-up are available, the courtesy runner shall be the player making the last batted out.

**Note:** The re-entry status of the courtesy runner, pitcher, and catcher shall not be affected by this rule. If at any time, a courtesy runner is determined to be ineligible, a proper replacement pursuant to these rules (if available) will be used without penalty.

## Slide Rule

Whenever a tag play is evident, a runner must slide or seek to avoid contact with the fielder and / or catcher. Attempting to jump, leap, or dive over the fielder and / or catcher is not interpreted as seeking to avoid contact. Malicious contact shall supersede all obstruction penalties.

**Penalty:** The runner shall be called out and may be ejected from the game at the umpire's discretion.

**Note:** When enforcing this rule, the umpire should judge the runner's intent. If the umpire feels that the contact was unintentional, then the runner should only be declared out. If the umpire feels that the contact was intentional and / or malicious, then the runner should be declared out and ejected.

## Regulation Game

A regulation game consists of six (6) innings for age divisions 4U – 12U and seven (7) innings for age divisions 13U – 18U, unless the game is:

Extended because the score is tied after the completion of the regulation number of innings, in which case, play shall continue until the visiting team has scored more total runs than the

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home team at the end of a completed inning, or the home team scores the winning run in an uncompleted inning; or

Shortened because the home team needs none of its half of the last inning or only a fraction of it to win; or

Shortened because an imposed Time Limit expires; or

Shortened because any applicable Run Rule has been met; or

Shortened because rain, weather, light failure or other acts of God.

If a game is called due to rain, weather, light failure or other acts of God and cannot be resumed, it is a regulation game if:

For a scheduled six (6) inning game, if three (3) innings have been completed or if the home team has scored more runs in two (2) innings or two and one half (2 1/2) innings than the visiting team has scored in three (3) complete innings or if the home team scores one (1) or more runs in its half (1/2) of the third (3rd) inning to tie the score.

If a regulation game is called with the score tied and one (1) or more innings has been completed beyond three (3) innings, the score shall revert back to last completed inning, or last completed half (1/2) inning if the home team leads but back no further than the third (3rd) inning.

**Note:** Games that cannot be declared a regulation game shall be a suspended game.

For a scheduled seven (7) inning game, if four (4) innings have been completed or if the home team has scored more runs in three (3) innings or three and one half (3 1/2) innings than the visiting team has scored in four (4) complete innings or if the home team scores one (1) or more runs in its half (1/2) of the fourth (4th) inning to tie the score.

If a regulation game is called with the score tied and one (1) or more innings has been completed beyond four (4) innings, the score shall revert back to last completed inning, or last completed half (1/2) inning if the home team leads but back no further than the fourth (4th) inning.

**Note:** Games that cannot be declared a regulation game shall be a suspended game.

A suspended game when resumed, will resume from the exact point of suspension.

### Conferences

The following rules pertain to the visit of the manager or a coach to the pitcher. This rule limits the number of visits a manager or a coach may make to any pitcher in any one (1) inning.

A second (2nd) visit to the same pitcher in the same inning will cause this pitcher's automatic removal from the pitching position.

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The manager or a coach is prohibited from making a second (2nd) visit to the mound while the same batter is at bat; however, if a pinch-hitter is substituted for this batter, the manager or a coach may make a second (2nd) visit to the mound, but must remove the pitcher.

A manager or a coach is considered to have concluded his visit to the mound when he leaves the eighteen (18) foot circle surrounding the pitcher's rubber.

Each team is limited to one offensive conference in any one (1) inning.

## **Pitching Restrictions**

A player removed from the pitching position (starting pitcher or subsequent relief pitcher) may not return to the pitching position for the remainder of the game. The defensive team may correct this rules infraction at any time by substituting a legal pitcher without penalty. If an illegal pitcher is permitted to pitch, any pitch or play that results is legal. The rule violation should be caught by the umpire or the offensive team and immediately corrected.

**Note:** If the violating pitcher has legal innings remaining, the violation is deemed an improper substitution and is corrected without penalty.

**Penalty:** If the violating pitcher has no legal innings remaining, it is deemed a pitching limitations violation pursuant to USSSA Rule 8.05.C.7.

The end of the day for the pitching limitation rules is the time of day or night when the ballpark is shutdown and the teams go home for the night break. Games that for any reason extend past midnight (12:00 AM) or start late at night, past midnight (12:00 AM) and are completed before the teams take the night break, will count as being played on the scheduled day. A game not completed before the night break shall be a suspended game. Suspended games, when resumed (the next day or another day), shall count as being played on two different days. The outs recorded during the portion of the game played prior to suspension shall count as being played on the regularly scheduled day and the outs recorded during the portion of the game played once resumed, shall count as being played on the resumed day.

## **ONE DAY MAXIMUM TO PITCH THE NEXT DAY**

The maximum number of innings a player can legally pitch in one (1) day and still pitch the next day.

In the 7U – 14U age divisions, a player may legally pitch a maximum of three (3) innings in one (1) day and still legally pitch the next day. If the player pitches three and one-third (3 1/3) or more innings in one (1) day, the player cannot legally pitch the next day.

In the 15U – 18U age divisions, a player may pitch an unlimited number of innings in one (1) day and still legally pitch the next day.

## **ONE DAY MAXIMUM**

The maximum number of innings a player can legally pitch in one (1) day.

In the 7U – 12U age divisions, a player may legally pitch a maximum of six (6) innings in one (1) day. The player would be ineligible to pitch the next day.

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In the 13U – 14U age divisions, a player may legally pitch a maximum of seven (7) innings in one (1) day. The player would be ineligible to legally pitch the next day.

In the 15U – 18U age divisions, a player may pitch an unlimited number of innings in one (1) day and still legally pitch the next day.

### THREE DAY MAXIMUM

The maximum number of innings a player can legally pitch in three (3) consecutive days.

In the 7U – 14U age divisions, a player may legally pitch a maximum of eight (8) innings in three (3) consecutive days. This is to be interpreted as a player may legally pitch any combination of innings to equal eight (8) innings in two (2) days as long as the player doesn't pitch more than three (3) innings the first (1st) day. Similarly, as a player may legally pitch any combination of innings to equal eight (8) innings in three (3) days as long as the player doesn't pitch more than three (3) innings the first (1st) or second (2nd) days.

In the 15U – 18U age divisions, a player may pitch an unlimited number of innings in three (3) consecutive days.

### MANDATORY DAYS OF REST

A player that pitches more than three (3) innings in one day **MUST** rest the next day.

A player that pitches eight (8) innings in two (2) consecutive days **MUST** rest the next day.

A player that pitches eight (8) innings in three (3) consecutive days **MUST** rest the next day.

A player that pitches three (3) consecutive days (regardless of total quantity of innings pitched) **MUST** rest the next day.

For all cumulative totals in this rule, one (1) out equals one-third (1/3) of an inning, two (2) outs equals two-thirds (2/3) of an inning and three (3) outs equals one (1) full inning.

A pitcher that pitches in a game and records no outs is not charged with any innings pitched.

Outs recorded during a game that ends in forfeit shall count towards a pitchers' innings limits.

For purposes of pitching limitations rules, a pitcher is in violation of the rule if he records any out above the legal pitching limits pursuant to these rules.

**Exception:** Exceeding the maximum innings allowed in the case of a double or triple play shall not be counted against the pitcher.

**Penalty:** It shall be the responsibility of each team manager to challenge pitching violations by notifying the Umpire-in-Chief and then filing a Protest with the Tournament Director. A protest may be filed at any point after the pitcher in violation records an out beyond his legal limit **AND** while the pitcher in violation is in the game and in the pitching position. If such violation is the last recorded out of the game, the protest **MUST** be filed prior to the umpires and the protesting team leaving the field of play. Any violation of USSSA Rules 8.05.C.1 – 8.05.C.7 shall result in immediate forfeiture of the game. If such violation occurs during

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Pool-Play, the team in violation of the rule may not advance to the championship bracket regardless of record.

## **Balks**

In age divisions 9U & 10U, pitchers will be allowed some leniency in regards to balks. Pitchers will be called for all major violations and warned for minor violations that do not affect the outcome of a play.

In age divisions 11U – 18U, balks will be strictly enforced without warning.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP & EJECTIONS**

All players, coaches, managers, sponsors and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times.

Any player, coach, manager, sponsor or spectator whose conduct is unbecoming or abusive shall at a minimum be reprimanded with a warning. If warranted, the offending party shall be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Umpires and / or the Tournament Director.

Any player, coach, manager, sponsor or spectator leaving their position or base, in the field, on the bench, in the dugout area or grandstands to participate in a fight, brawl or altercation shall be immediately ejected from the game and may be disbarred / suspended pursuant to USSSA Rule 13.00.

Any coach, manager, sponsor or spectator ejected from a game shall immediately remove himself from the vicinity of the playing field and / or grandstands for the remainder of the game. Additional penalties may be assessed at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

Any player ejected from a game shall either immediately be confined to the dugout area for the remainder of the game.

All persons ejected may be asked to leave the park and / or venue at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

Abusive language or cursing shall not be tolerated under any circumstances and shall result in an automatic ejection.

Throwing of equipment shall result in an automatic ejection.

If necessary, a team may be forced to forfeit a game and / or be removed from the tournament.

As these rules indicate, the matter of disorderly conduct shall be taken seriously. The tournaments your team will be participating in will include some of the finest baseball teams in the world. The level of competition will be high and at times fierce. Because of this, please remind all players, coaches, managers, sponsors and spectators to be extra aware of good sportsmanship.

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## Coach Pitch Specific Rules

### Fair Ball Arc

There shall be a twenty (20) foot arc drawn from first (1st) baseline to third (3rd) baseline in front of home plate. A batted ball must go past this line to be a fair ball.

### Safety Arc

There shall be a thirty (30) foot arc drawn from first (1st) baseline to third (3rd) baseline in front of home plate. Infielders must stay behind this line until the ball is hit.

### Pitching Circle

There shall be a ten (10) foot diameter circle with the front edge set at forty-two (42) feet from the rear point of home plate.

### Pitcher's Line

There shall be a line drawn from the pitcher's circle to the fair ball arc.

The pitching coach shall keep one foot on or straddle the pitcher's line.

The pitching coach shall not verbally or physically coach while in the pitching position.

The pitching coach shall position himself as not to be an obstruction to the defensive team on any possible play once the ball has been hit.

**Penalty:** If a coach violates this rule after the ball is pitched, obstruction will be called.

**Additional Penalty:** If a coach violates this rule before the ball is pitched:

First Offense: Warning

Second Offense: Removal of coach as the pitcher for the remainder of the game.

### Catcher

The catcher shall receive the pitch in the catcher's box in a normal baseball manner. If in the umpire's judgment, the catcher is not receiving the ball in a normal baseball manner, there will be a warning issued. If the act continues after the warning, the offending teams' manager will be ejected.

### Number of Defensive Players

Ten (10) defensive players shall play in the field with four (4) outfielders. The fourth (4th) outfielder shall not assume an infield position. All outfielders shall stay behind the baselines.

### Player Pitcher

The defensive player listed as pitcher shall not leave the pitching circle until the ball is hit.

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**Penalty:** The play continues. After the play has ended, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or no-pitch.

**Additional Penalty:**

First Offense: Warning

Second Offense: Removal of player from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

**Defensive Coaches**

Defensive coaches shall not be allowed on the field of play and shall coach from the dugout.

**Infield Fly Rule**

The Infield Fly Rule shall not be in effect at any time.

**Line-ups**

The batting order shall constitute all present players on the team roster at the beginning of the game. Late arrivals shall be inserted at the bottom of the batting order. All players on the roster shall bat before returning to the top of the batting order.

Teams may start a game with eight (8) players. The ninth (9th) & tenth (10th) positions in the batting order will be declared an out each turn at bat.

**Note:** A ninth (9th) & tenth (10th) player and all subsequent players may be added to the bottom of the batting line-up as soon as they become available.

Teams may use free substitution on defense but the batting order shall remain the same.

**Bunting**

Bunting shall not be allowed.

**Batter**

The batter shall receive a maximum of six (6) pitches or three (3) swinging strikes.

**Note:** A batter that has received less than six (6) pitches and has a count of two (2) swinging strikes shall have his turn at bat extended on foul balls up to the six (6) pitch limit.

**Intentional Walks**

A player may only be Intentionally Walked once per game by announcement from the defensive team.

**Note:** An Intentional Walk may be issued at any point in the count to the batter. "Time" will be called by the umpire prior to the award and play will not resume until after the batter has reached first base.

**Lead-Offs**

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Runners shall not lead-off or steal bases. A runner is out for leaving the base before the ball is hit or reaches home plate.

## **Courtesy Runner**

A courtesy runner for catcher of record only the previous inning may be used. The courtesy runner shall be the player that made the previous out. If no outs have been recorded in the game, the courtesy runner shall be the previous batter not on base.

## **Run Limits**

A team may score a maximum of seven (7) runs per inning, including the last inning, or record three (3) outs.

## **Time**

Umpires shall call "Time" after every play and declare the ball dead. "Time" shall be called as soon as the lead runner is not attempting to advance. "Time" does not have to be called by the defense for the purpose of this rule.

**Note:** When a runner stands off a base and "jukes" or "feints" back and forth, this is to be interpreted as "not attempting to advance" and "Time" shall be called.

## **Pitching Coach Interference**

When a batted ball hits the Pitching Coach, the following shall apply:

If in the umpire's judgment, the coach did not make a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, the batter is declared out and no runners shall advance.

If in the umpire's judgment, the coach did make a legitimate attempt to avoid contact, the ball becomes dead and a no-pitch is declared.