



## 2023 Senior Circuit Rules & Standards

### 1. Pre-Game and Post-Game Procedures

- Teams must be prepared to play up to 15 minutes prior to scheduled start time.
- Teams must have a minimum of 10 players. The Short-Bench Rule will be used.
- Home team in round-robin play will be decided by the flip of a coin. The highest seed from the round-robin will be the Home Team for the playoffs.
- Home team score sheet will be deemed as the Official Score Sheet for the game. No practice on the infield before game. Start of game - 3 pitches. Between innings - 1 pitch, no infield ball.
- Line-up cards will be used in all games and must be presented to the Umpire at the pre-game meeting. FULL NAMES are to be used. They become Official when accepted by the Umpire at the pre-game meeting. Only Players listed (starters and substitutes) are eligible to play in that game. Names may NOT be added after the lineup becomes official.
- At the start of the game, when the Umpires start the pre-game meeting, all practice ends and the players go to their bench.
- As soon as the pre-game meeting is over, the home team should take the field.
- At the conclusion of the game, players are to go to their bench area and clear their equipment out as quickly as possible to allow teams for the next game to occupy their bench. Any post-game meetings of teams should be done off the playing field after their dugout is cleared.

### 2. Special Rules

- **Grandfather Age Rule:**
  - 1) In the 50+ to 65+ divisions, a maximum of two (2) Players that are one (1) calendar year younger than the division age will be permitted on each team.
  - 2) In the 70+ division, a maximum of three (3) Players that are one (1) calendar year younger than the division age will be permitted on each team.

- 3) In the 75+ division, a maximum of four (4) Players that are one (1) calendar year younger than the division age will be permitted on each team.

These Players cannot have an A or B rating. Current and previous year's Rosters will be used in determining a Player's rating.

- ***Equalizer Rule – All Divisions Over 50+, If Categories/Divisions Need To Be Combined:***

The older or lower division team will be given the choice of the following:

- (a) 5 Runs (1 per inning through innings 2-6); OR
- (b) 11 Players on Defense and is the visiting team.

- ***Short-Bench Rule:***

- 1) A player will be permitted to play on a team in a lower division along with his own team in the same tournament ***providing he is the proper age***. This can only be done if a team is below 14 players and they can only add to take their team up to a maximum of 14 players.
- 2) **Any addition must be done in writing and submitted to the Registration Desk prior to the first game of the tournament. This cannot be done during an event.**
- 3) A player may be on more than one short-handed list. **Please Note: This rule has been implemented in an effort to increase participation. Please do not abuse this initiative.**
- 4) If a player is ejected, they will not be able to play on either team until they sit out a game from the division they were ejected from.
- 5) If a player gets ejected from the team's last game of the tournament and if their other team is still playing, they will have to sit out that next game and then would be eligible.

- ***Pitching Screen Rules – 70+ and 75+ Divisions Only:***

- 1) Screen must be placed on the pitcher's glove hand side, no more than 2 bat lengths from the front of the pitching rubber toward home plate. Place no more than 6 inches outside the glove side edge of the pitching rubber.
- 2) The pitcher must set the screen where they want it before the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch of an inning and leave it for the whole inning.
- 3) Any ball hit into the pitching screen or striking any part of the screen will be considered a foul ball. Hitting of the screen of a third strike foul ball will be considered an out.
- 4) Any ball thrown into the screen will be considered a live ball.
- 5) Pitcher must step behind the screen every pitch. Failure to do so, pitch will be called a ball and a warning will be given. A second warning may result in the pitcher being removed from the pitching position.
- 6) Pitcher can move from behind the screen and field balls after contact.

7) Pitcher masks must still be worn.

- **Temporary Runner:**

A temporary runner is to be used for a pitcher who is on base with two out and the following provisions apply:

- 1) It is not optional.
- 2) There must be two out.
- 3) If the pitcher is on base with less than two out, the Temporary Runner must be used after the second out occurs.
- 4) **The Temporary Runner can be anyone on the line-up card and no longer needs to be designated by the Manager during the pre-game meeting.**
- 5) If the pitcher is the runner in the tie-breaker situation, they will be considered the same as if they had batted and would be replaced by a Temporary Runner with two out.
- 6) **Re-entry and substitution rules are waived for the Temporary Runner.**
- 7) **If a Temporary Runner is due to go to bat, any other player on the line-up card can be used for the Temporary Runner without penalty.**

### 3. **Game**

- **1-1 Count:** Batter will start with a 1-1 count in ALL divisions. A 3<sup>rd</sup> strike foul is an out.
- **Mercy Rule:** 12 or more runs after 5 innings (4½ if home team is ahead). A team may voluntarily withdraw if down by 15 or more runs after 3 (2½ if home team is ahead).
- **Maximum Runs:** All Seniors 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+, 70+ and 75+ divisions: A maximum of 5 runs per inning may be scored. (Exception: 7<sup>th</sup> inning and, in the event of a tie after the 7<sup>th</sup> inning, any subsequent inning). If, with runners on base, a player hits an over the fence home run which scores more than the allowable 5 runs per inning, the home run will count towards the team's Home Run total. A team 17 or more runs ahead after 3½ (if the home team) or 4 innings (if the visiting team) shall be declared the winner.
- **Tie Games:** Games tied at the end of 7 innings will use the Tie-Breaker rule at the start of the 8th inning.
- **Scores:** After each game, the Coach of the winning team is responsible to ensure that the score reported to the Headquarters within 15 minutes of the completion of the game. If there is any question regarding the result, no argument will be accepted if the score has not been reported via this procedure. We would appreciate if the losing team also reported the score.
- **Player Ejection:** Any player or team representative ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike behaviour will be immediately suspended for a minimum of one (1) additional game. If the offence is flagrant or is a second offence, the suspension is for the entire tournament with further review by SPO. Participants are expected to follow the SPO Code of Conduct.

If there is an incident on the field of play (including foul territory) that causes a player or coach on the bench to join into the altercation, then all involved players and coaches will be ejected immediately from the game and also be given a minimum three (3) game suspension. The Disciplinary Committee can also add to the suspension if the incident is deemed as a major infraction. If a second offence occurs, it will result in the removal of the player or coach from the balance of the tournament.

- **Profanity Rule:** See SPO Profanity Policy.
- **Jewelry:** A player is solely responsible for any injury caused by his/her wearing of jewellery. An Umpire may request any exposed jewellery be removed. Refusal to comply is an immediate removal. Knee braces must be covered.
- **Courtesy Runners – All Divisions:** Unlimited, but a runner may run only once per inning.
- **Base Running – All Divisions:** No outfielder may make a direct throw force out at first base. Tagging of a runner in between the Commitment Line and the Scoring Line is not permitted.
- **Pinch Runner for Batter – 70+ and 75+ Divisions Only:** The batter must be declared prior to the start of the game. The pinch runner must start at the designated spot at the backstop. Runner can only advance to first base on any hit.
- **Home Runs:** A batter hitting a ball over the fence in a game in excess of the limit shall be ruled out.
- **Home Run Limits - All Divisions: Three (3)**

#### 4. Equipment

- **Protective Equipment:** Protective face gear is mandatory for all pitchers. Protective headgear with face protection is strongly recommended. In the interest of player safety, we would also encourage all batter/base runners to wear helmets.
- **Bats:** For the 2023 Senior Circuit season, all bats used must adhere to the USSSA Licensed/Approved Bat Policy. A bat must bear the “USSSA BPF 1.20” mark on its taper to be legal. This mark is known as the “Thumbprint”, and is shown below.



#### **Old USSSA Stamp: Now Legal Indefinitely!**

This bat standard was introduced for bats made from 2012 to 2020 that met the 220lb compression testing in order to address the problem of composite bats “breaking in” (either naturally, or by mechanical means) to a level beyond the legal limit. Manufacturers can still make bats to meet the 220lb compression standard, but they can no longer have the USSSA Stamp on them.



### New NTS Stamp:

Beginning with 2021 Models, USSSA began using the new 240lb compression standard with the NTS stamp (left). Moving forward, 240lb compression standards bats are all that can be approved to have a USSSA Stamp on them.

All bats must be out of the bags and on the fence prior to inspection by the Umpire. **Bats left in bat bags will not be permitted.** If you are not going to use a bat, it is to be left in your vehicle. This will be closely monitored and strong sanctions will be issued to player(s) and team(s) who do not adhere to this Policy.

1<sup>st</sup> Offence – Written Warning.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offence – Player and Coach Ejection.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offence – Team Ejection from the Event, with further review by SPO.

- **Ball Retrieval:** Each team must have a ball bag with sufficient balls hung on the backstop near the dugout. When a ball goes out of play, the Umpire gets a ball from the offensive team's ball bag. That team then replaces that ball by going and getting the ball that just went out of play.

## 5. General

- **Forfeits:** Any team that intentionally forfeits the start of a game during a tournament may be suspended from the remainder of the tournament and receive no points.
- **Smoking:** No smoking or vaping of tobacco or cannabis will be permitted within any of the confines of Slo-Pitch City, in accordance with the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* and its Regulations. ***Anyone that is smoking anywhere inside the facility will be asked to leave for the remainder of the weekend. There will be zero tolerance on this.***
- **Draw Boards:** While the event schedules are posted on-line no later than Wednesday at noon, there may be a few adjustments to games in the day or so after. Your first game time will not change. The Official Draw Boards will be the ones posted at the Complex. If you want to print a copy, we would suggest that you wait until later on Friday to do so.
- **Player Registration:** All Players and Coaches must be registered and **Active** SPO Members and have paid the 2023 Senior Circuit Program Fee prior to playing.
- **Alcohol Consumption:** This a reminder that there is **NO DRINKING OUTSIDE OF ANY LICENSED AREA, INCLUDING ANY PARKING LOT.** We will have **ZERO TOLERANCE** for this. Any alcoholic beverage being consumed in the parking lot will result in the suspension of the involved teams. Even if only one person in the group is drinking, all involved teams will be penalized. If someone near you is drinking, either stop them or leave the area. Please make sure this Policy is clear to your Players and friends, families and fans. Thanks to everyone for your anticipated cooperation with this matter.

- **Accommodations:** We have again negotiated special rates for SPO Senior Circuit teams at various London hotels and lodging facilities. A complete list can be found on the Senior Circuit section of our website under Accommodations. Be sure to tell them you are a Senior Circuit team when booking. You must call direct to get the SPO rate - please do not book on-line! As always, we appreciate and thank you for your support of the businesses who support SPO and our Tournament Programs.

**We remind you that the following hotels are not businesses in good standing with SPO and we ask teams to not support these property locations:**

- 1) Ramada London (Exeter Road, London)**
- 2) Quality Suites London (Dearness Drive, London)**

**Teams insistent on staying at these locations will not be welcome in any SPO Events. Should you have any questions, or require any further information with respect to this matter, please contact Tom Buchan directly at (905) 646-7773.**

## ***PLEASE NOTE***

*Senior Circuit organizers reserve the right to make decisions which they perceive to be in the best interests of the Tournament and the Senior Circuit Program.*

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**We wish everyone a safe and successful 2023 season.**

**Thank you for your continued support of our Association!**

***Welcome Back!***