

## RULE 7.00 – RULES OF PLAY

### 7.01 Playing Field & Equipment –

**7.01.A (Chart 7.01.A-1)** The playing field shall be laid out according to the recommended dimensions contained within these rules.

**7.01.B** For details on field layout including recommended direction of play, fair and foul territory requirements, infield and outfield grades, pitcher's mound height and slope, batter's and catcher's box dimensions, and base and home plate size and construction should be referred to the Official Rules of Baseball as published by Major League Baseball on MLB.com.

**7.01.C Bats** - The Official Bat shall be round in cross section of the barrel and taper, straight in length and measure not more than 36 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 for small barrel bats and not more than 2 and 3/4 inches for big barrel bats 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

AGE DIVISION	BASE PATHS	PITCHING DISTANCE	FENCE AT FOUL LINES	FENCE AT CENTER FIELD
4U	55'	N/A	140'	175'
5U	55'	N/A	140'	175'
6U	55'	N/A	140'	175'
7U	60'	40'	160'	185'
8U	60'	40'	160'	185'
9U	65'	46'	180'	210'
10U	65'	46'	180'	210'
11U	70'	50'	230'	275'
12U	70'	50'	230'	275'
13U	80'	54'	275'	300'
14U (54/80)	80'	54'	275'	300'
14U (57/85)	85'	57'	275'	300'
14U (60/90) – 18U	90'	60' 6"	320'	375'

Chart 7.01.A-1

tape or some other material to facilitate holding the bat during the batter's swing (not mandatory on wooden bats). 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.

**7.01.C.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.

**7.01.C.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 weights, may be used the on deck circle.

**7.01.C.C. Big Barrel Bats** (Diameter greater than 2¼" but not more than 2¾")

EFFECTIVE January 1, 2012 14 U AND YOUNGER BIG BARREL BAT RULES. TO BE LEGAL IN 2012 FOR USSSA 14U AND BELOW, A BIG BARREL BAT (no more than 2¾ inches diameter and no more than 36 inches in length) MUST BE MANUFACTURED BY AN APPROVED USSSA BAT LICENSEE, AND

i) HAVE THE NEW USSSA MARK ON ITS TAPER, OR

("USSSA marks and other graphics of the bat must be applied permanently and must be applied by the USSSA licensed manufacturer. No stickers or decals are allowed and no one may add graphics to a bat once manufactured. Use of a bat with graphics not applied by the manufacturer will be use of an altered bat and subject to suspension under the USSSA Altered Bat rules. In addition to being violation of the USSSA Altered Bat rules, any use, creation or application of a USSSA mark without written permission of USSSA is a violation of Federal Trademark law and may result in prosecution by USSSA. If you have any concern about the person selling or providing you a bat, do not accept the bat, because you will be held responsible for any bat you bring into or use in a USSSA facility.")

ii) BE A QUALIFIED BBCOR BAT, OR

iii) BE A WOOD BAT.

"Qualified BBCOR Bat" means a Big Barrel bat that is made by a USSSA approved bat licensee, has a BBCOR mark permanently attached to the bat that is recognized by NHSF as a legal bat for NHSF sanctioned play and has no more than a minus 3 ounces difference from the length of the bat which bat must be at least 29 inches long. Please note that only Qualified BBCOR bats have any weight v. length (drop) limitation.

EFFECTIVE January 1, 2012, 15U and Above Division of Play (15U – 18U scholastic divisions). 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. These bats must be made by an approved USSSA licensed manufacturer AND

i) Must be NHSF approved with the appropriate BBCOR certification mark, OR

ii) Be a Wood Bat.

The new USSSA mark can be found in the Baseball Tab of the USSSA Website.

**7.01.C.D. Small Barrel Bats** (Diameter no more than 2¼")

EFFECTIVE for the calendar years 2012 and 2013. Only those Small Barrel bats made by approved USSSA licensed manufacturers that are either:

i) Wood, OR

ii) Made with the old USSSA mark, OR

iii) Have the New USSSA Mark will be allowed in USSSA play.

This includes Tee Ball bats that are longer than 23 inches. 23 inch and shorter. Small Barrel Tee Ball bats from approved USSSA licensed manufacturers will continue to be allowed in 2012 and 2013 without the Old or New USSSA Mark.

The Old mark is simply the words "USSSA 1.15 BPF", all together in one spot on the bat.

The new USSSA mark can be found in the Baseball Tab of the USSSA Website.

EFFECTIVE for the calendar years 2014, only those Small Barrel bats made by approved USSSA licensed manufacturers that are either:

i) Wood, OR

ii) Made with the New USSSA Mark will be allowed in USSSA play.

This includes all Tee Ball bats that are longer than 23 inches. 23 inch and shorter Small Barrel Tee Ball bats from approved USSSA licensed manufacturers will continue to be allowed in 2014 without the New USSSA Mark.

**7.01.C.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.

**7.01.C.E.I. 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.

**7.01.C.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 USSSA 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.

**7.01.C.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.

**7.01.C.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.

**7.01.C.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 USSSA 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.

**7.01.C.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.

**7.01.C.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.

**7.01.C.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 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 1.15 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.

**7.01.C.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 on his players in connection with sections E and/or EI. will be suspended from all USSSA activities for life.

**7.01.C.N. Altered Bat.** An "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).

**Penalty for using illegal bats:**

**First Offense** - If the umpire discovers that the bat does not conform to USSSA Rule 7.01.C until a time during or after which the bat has been used in play, it shall not be grounds for declaring the batter out and/or ejection from the game. If the umpire discovers that a bat has been used to put a ball in play and before the next legal pitch, the defensive team will have the choice of the result of play or the batter being called out and all runners returning to the base occupied before the pitch.

**Second Offense** – If a team is found in violation of this rule a second time, then the manager will be ejected in addition to the First Offense penalty.

**7.01.C.O. Protective Gear.** As a general rule, USSSA continues its long standing policy of permitting players to determine the use of the protective equipment when they deem it appropriate. Game conditions (temperature, equipment, rain, wind, visibility, field conditions, humidity, etc.) vary greatly from game to game and from field to field. In addition, the relative and absolute experience and skill levels of teams and players will vary from player to player and from team to team. Thus, USSSA encourages players to utilize any protective equipment that they deem appropriate. Such protective gear will be allowed in USSSA sanctioned play, unless by rule or by director/umpire ruling that such protective gear is disallowed as unsafe or as providing an unfair competitive advantage .

**7.01D1 Altered Balls.**

An 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, re-stitched, surface modified to be rougher or softer, etc. Altered Balls and the potential of a ball being altered and those suspected of altering, owning or using an altered ball (or determined to have altered, owned or used an Altered Ball) shall be viewed as falling under the same rules in place above for Altered bats, above.

**7.01.F Uniforms**

**7.01.F.1 Shoes** - In age divisions 4U – 12U, non-metal cleats must be worn. In age divisions 13U – 18U, traditional metal baseball spikes may be worn.

**7.01.F.2** Protests on uniforms shall not be allowed. It shall be the League / Tournament Director's responsibility regarding uniform legality. Violation of the uniform rules shall result in the violator being allowed to immediately conform or be removed from the game. Managers and coaches may wear athletic type shorts.

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

**7.01.H** 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. Bat/ball boys are not allowed

**Rule 7.01.H Comment:** 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.

**7.01.I** Playing equipment including but not limited to the baseballs, bases, bats, catcher's gloves and mitts, first baseman's gloves and mitts, infielders and outfielders gloves and mitts, protective helmets, and uniforms as detailed in the provisions of this rule, shall not contain any undue commercialization of the product. Designations by the manufacturer on any such equipment shall be in good taste as to the size and content of the manufacturer's logo or the brand name.

**7.01.J** Manufacturers who plan innovative changes in baseball equipment for future play should submit same to the USSSA Baseball National Committee prior to production.

**7.02** Game Preliminaries –

**7.02.A** A flip of a coin between the two teams shall determine the home team for each pool play game if not designated prior to play and the "if" game in championship play. The highest seeded team will be the home team for bracket play games until the if game in bracket play.

**Rule 7.02.A Comment:** For league play, a system to predetermine the home team is acceptable.

**7.02.B** In League, Qualifying Tournament and State Championship play, time limits may be used with approval of the League / Tournament / State Director.

**7.02.C** In World Series play, time limits may be used in pool play and consolation bracket games with approval of the Association's Executive Vice President of Baseball.

**7.02.D** Approved Team Line-ups:

**7.02.D.1** 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.

**7.02.D.1(a)** 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.

**7.02.D.1(b)** 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.

**7.02.D.1(c)** 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. Any player(s) arriving after the game has begun, shall be added to the bottom of the batting line-up. When using the continuous lineup and a player has to leave the game for any reason, that position in the line-up becomes an out when that at bat comes around.

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

**7.02.E.1** A Designated Hitter may be (not mandatory) selected for any one starting player and all subsequent substitutes for that player in the game.

**7.02.E.2** A starting defensive player cannot be listed as the Designated Hitter in the starting line-up.

**7.02.E.3** 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.

**7.02.E.4** Failure to declare a Designated Hitter prior to the game precludes the use of a DH in the game.

**7.02.E.5** If a pinch hitter or pinch runner for the Designated Hitter is used, that player becomes the new DH.

- 7.02.E.6 The player who was the Designated Hitter may re-enter pursuant to USSSA Rule 7.02.D.1(a).
- 7.02.E.7 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.
- 7.02.E.8 The role of the Designated Hitter is terminated for the remainder of the game when:
  - 7.02.E.8(a) The defensive player, or any previous defensive player for whom the Designated Hitter batted, subsequently bats, pinch-hits, or runs for the DH;
  - 7.02.E.8(b) The Designated Hitter or any previous DH assumes a defensive position.

**7.02.F** 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. 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.

**7.02.G** A team may continue a game with a minimum of eight (8) eligible players.

**7.03** Starting and Ending a Game –

**7.03.A** 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:

- 7.03.A.1 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 home team at the end of a completed inning, or the home team scores the winning run in an uncompleted inning; or
- 7.03.A.2 Shortened because the home team needs none of its half of the last inning or only a fraction of it to win; or
- 7.03.A.3 Shortened because an imposed Time Limit expires; or
- 7.03.A.4 Shortened because any applicable part of USSSA Rule 7.03.B has been met; or
- 7.03.A.5 Shortened because any applicable part of USSSA Rule 7.03.C has been met.

**7.03.B (Chart 7.03.B-1)** 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 listed start inning. In enforcing this rule, the home team shall not bat if they are winning and the mercy requirement is met prior to the bottom half of the listed inning. Similarly, if the home team is batting and meets the mercy requirement in the bottom half of a listed inning the home team shall cease batting and the game shall end.

LENGTH OF GAME	RUN DIFFERENTIAL	START INNING
6 Innings	15	3rd Inning
6 Innings	8	4th Inning
7 Innings	15	3rd Inning
7 Innings	12	4th Inning
7 Innings	8	5th Inning

Chart 7.03.B-1

**7.03.C** 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:

- 7.03.C.1 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.
  - 7.03.C.1(a) 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. Games that cannot be declared a regulation game by USSSA Rules 7.03.C.1 & 7.03.C.1(a) shall be a suspended game.
- 7.03.C.2 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.
  - 7.03.C.2(a) 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. Games that cannot be declared a regulation game by USSSA Rules 7.03.C.2 & 7.03.C.2(a) shall be a suspended game.

**7.03.D** All games that for any reason cannot be declared a regulation game pursuant to USSSA Rule 7.03.C shall be a suspended game. A suspended game when resumed, will resume from the exact point of suspension.

**7.04** The Batter, Batter Runner & Runner –

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

**7.04.B** 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. 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.

**7.04.C** 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.

**Rule 7.04.C Penalty:** The runner shall be called out and may be ejected from the game at the umpire's discretion.

**Rule 7.04.C Comment:** 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.

**7.05** The Pitcher –

**7.05.A** Leagues and tournaments shall adopt the following rules pertaining 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;

- 7.05.A.1** A second (2nd) visit to the same pitcher in the same inning will cause this pitcher's automatic removal from the pitching position;
- 7.05.A.2** The manager or a coach is prohibited from making a second (2nd) visit to the mound while the same batter is at bat, but
- 7.05.A.3** 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.

**7.05.B** 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. If the violating pitcher has legal innings remaining, the violation is deemed an improper substitution and is corrected without penalty. If the violating pitcher has no legal innings remaining, it's deemed a pitching limitations violation pursuant to USSSA Rule 7.05.C.7.

**7.05.C(Chart 7.05.C-1)** 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 pursuant to USSSA Rules 7.03.C.1(a) & 7.03.C.2(a), 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.

**7.05.C.1 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.

AGE DIVISION	ONE DAY MAXIMUM TO PITCH THE NEXT DAY	ONE DAY MAXIMUM	THREE DAY MAXIMUM
7U – 12U	3	6	8
13U – 14U	3	7	8
15U – 18U	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED	UNLIMITED

Chart 7.05.C-1

**Rule 7.05.C.1 Example:** 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 can not legally pitch the next day.

**7.05.C.2 ONE DAY MAXIMUM:** The maximum number of innings a player can legally pitch in one (1) day.  
**Rule 7.05.C.2 Example:** 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. Similarly, 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.

**7.05.C.3 THREE DAY MAXIMUM:** The maximum number of innings a player can legally pitch in three (3) consecutive days.  
**Rule 7.05.C.3 Example:** 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.

**7.05.C.4 MANDATORY DAYS OF REST;**

- 7.05.C.4(a)** A player that pitches more than three (3) innings in one day **MUST** rest the next day.
- 7.05.C.4(b)** A player that pitches eight (8) innings in two (2) consecutive days **MUST** rest the next day.
- 7.05.C.4(c)** A player that pitches three (3) consecutive days (regardless of total quantity of innings pitched) **MUST** rest the next day.

**7.05.C.5** 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.

**7.05.C.6** Outs recorded during a game that ends in forfeit shall count towards a pitchers' innings limits.

**7.05.C.7** 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.

**Rule 7.05.C.7 Exception:** Exceeding the maximum innings allowed in the case of a double or triple play shall not be counted against the pitcher.

**Rule 7.05.C.7 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 League / 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 7.05.C.1 – 7.05.C.7 shall result in immediate forfeiture of the game. If such violation occurs during Pool-Play, the team in violation of the rule may not advance to the championship bracket regardless of record.

**7.05.D** It is a balk if the pitcher, while touching his plate, feints a throw to first or third base and fails to complete the throw: Pitchers may still feint a throw to second.