

2011 USSSA Fast Pitch Rule Changes

At or after its convention in November, 2010, USSSA Fast Pitch adopted the following rule changes and editorial changes.

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Major Rule Changes

Rule 5.4 Adopt DP/FLEX to replace DH.

This adoption imposes additions to Definitions and changes to Rules 3.58, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, and 8.3.

Rule 3 Add Definition FLEX & DP

3.XX Designated Player (DP)

The Primary Role of the DP is to play offense (bats/runs) for the FLEX. The DP may play defense at any position.

3.XX FLEX

The Primary Role of the FLEX is to play defense only which can be at any defensive position.

The FLEX may remain in the last position (non-batting) in the lineup for the entire game, or may assume the DP's position in the batting order and play offense (bat/run).

Rule 3.58 **STARTING PLAYER.** A starting player is one of the first nine, ten, eleven or twelve (if using the optional DP/FLEX and/or APs) listed on the lineup card that is approved by the Plate Umpire.

Rule 5.1 **PLAYERS** - A team shall consist of at least nine players, whose positions shall be designated as; (1) Pitcher, (2) Catcher, (3) First Baseman, (4) Second Baseman, (5) Third Baseman, (6) Short Stop, (7) Left Fielder, (8) Center Fielder, (9) Right Fielder. In addition, a team may optionally include a DP/FLEX and/or up to two Additional Players (AP). The maximum number of players in the lineup is 12; the maximum number of batters in the lineup is 11.

Rule 5.4 **DP/FLEX** - A team may use the Designated Player (DP)/FLEX option provided it is made known prior to the start of the game.

- a. The DP's name is indicated on the lineup as one of the batters in the batting order.
- b. The name of the player for whom the DP is batting (FLEX) will be placed in the last position (non-batting) following the last batter in the lineup.
- c. The DP must remain in the same position in the lineup for the entire game.
- d. The DP may be substituted for at any time by a legal substitute or the FLEX.
 1. If the starting DP is replaced on offense by the FLEX, the DP will leave the game. This reduces the number of players in the lineup by one. However the number of batters does not change.
 2. If replaced by a substitute, the DP position remains in the lineup.
- e. A starting DP may re-enter one time, as long as the DP returns to the original position in the batting order. If the DP re-enters or a substitute enters as the DP and the FLEX was batting in the DP's spot, the FLEX can:
 1. return to the last position (non-batting) and play defense only, or

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2. leave the game.
- f. The DP may play defense at any position.
 1. The DP may play defense for a player other than the FLEX, that player will continue to bat but not play defense, and is not considered to have left the game.
 2. The DP may play defense for the FLEX and the FLEX is considered to have left the game, reducing the number of players by eliminating the non-batting position in the lineup.
- g. The FLEX may be substituted for at any time by a legal substitute. The DP or an AP may play defense for the FLEX. In either case, the FLEX will leave the game. If replaced by a substitute, the FLEX position remains in the lineup. The FLEX may re-enter the game one time provided they return to the non-batting position in the lineup.
 1. If replaced by the DP, this eliminates the non-batting position.
 2. If the FLEX re-enters or a substitute enters as the FLEX and the DP was playing defense in the FLEX player's spot,
 - a). the DP can return to batting only, play defense for another player and the non-batting position is re-established or
 - b). The DP can leave the game if the FLEX plays offense for the DP.
- h. Placing the FLEX into one of the batting positions for someone other than the DP's position is considered an illegal substitution. The illegal substitute shall be removed from the game and restricted to the dugout/bench.

Rule 5.5 **Substitute**

Add the following

The DP may go in and out of the game for any player (including the FLEX), at any defensive position, any time and any number of times without it counting as a substitution for anyone except the FLEX. This movement in and out of the game must be reported to the plate umpire to avoid an unreported player violation.

The FLEX may go in and out of the DP's position in the batting order any time and any number of times. This action counts as a substitution for the DP. This movement in and out of the game must be reported to the plate umpire to avoid an unreported player violation.

Effect—Placing the FLEX into one of the batting positions in the lineup for someone other than the original DP (or substitute) results in ejection of the FLEX.

Rule 8.3.F The courtesy runner is not permitted to be used for the DP unless the DP is the pitcher or catcher of record.

Change was made to be consistent with high school and college rules.

Rule 6.1 Require Two feet on the pitching plate

Rule 6.1.A.paragraph 1 - Prior to the pitch, the pitcher shall put both feet on the pitcher's plate.

Rule 6.1.E.2 - During the delivery, the pitcher shall take exactly one forward step toward home plate and land within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

No step backward is allowed.

Change was made to be consistent with college pitching rules.

Rule Changes

Rule 1.1 Pitching Distances -13U & 14U

Rule 1.1 - Pitching distance for 13U on up will be 43 Ft beginning 1/1/2011.

Change was approved at 2009 convention extending 43 ft pitching distance to 14U & 13U for 2011.

Rules 3.10 and 5.1.B Lineup - Names

Current Rule 3.10

BATTING ORDER. The batting order is the official listing of offensive players by first and last name, in the order in which they are to bat. Uniform number and defensive position shall be listed on the lineup sheet.

Modified Rule 5.1.B

The team's lineup card shall include **first name, last name**, jersey number, position and batting order of each starting player and should include each eligible substitute.

Resolve inconsistency in Rules 3.10 and 5.1.B. - Require first and last names on lineup

Rule 6.1.D Pitcher removing them self from pitching position

Add Rule 6.1.D Note

Before the pitch starts, the pitcher may remove them self from the pitching position by stepping back from the pitcher's plate with both feet (either foot may be removed first) or by requesting time.

Adopts explicit language as to how a pitcher who is on the rubber can remove them self from pitching position.

Rule 9.6.A Retouch on awarded bases

Modify Rule 9.6.A - A runner may not return ... if:

he has advanced, touched and remains beyond the base missed or left too soon and the ball becomes dead.

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It should be explicitly stated that a runner may complete their advance or return.

Rule 17.13.a and Rule 18.18.a Pitching Coach Restrictions

Modified Rule 17.13.a

The pitching coach may only coach the batter prior to pitch. The coach may not coach the batter-runner or runners at ANY time.

Slight Word Modification to Rule 18.18.a

The coach feeding the machine may only coach the batter prior to feeding the ball. The coach may not coach the batter-runner or runners at ANY time.

*Make restriction in Rule 17 Coach Pitch & Rule 18 Machine Pitch the same –
Can only coach batter prior to pitch.*

Editorial Changes

Rule 2 Equipment - Bat warmers

Add Rule 2 after Sec 10

Bat Warmers approved by USSSA are permitted.

Explicitly state current policy

Rule 3 Definitions - Intentional walk

Sec 3. BASE ON BALLS

Change current statement in Rule 3.3: "There is no intentional walk in Fast Pitch." to

"The defense may not notify the umpire nor cause illegal pitch(es) to intentionally walk a batter. A team may intentionally walk a batter. However they must throw four pitches. They cannot simply declare to put the batter on base nor can the pitcher commit repeated illegal pitches.

Clarify meaning.

Rule 3 Definitions - Catch.

REWRITE

Rule 3 Definitions - Sec 15. CATCH.

A catch is the act of a fielder getting secure possession in a hand or glove of a live ball in flight and firmly holding it.

A. In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove complete control of it and that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.

1. If a player drops the ball after reaching into the glove to remove it or while in the act of throwing, it is a valid catch.
2. It is considered a catch if a fielder catches the ball before leaving live-ball area by stepping or falling into a bench, dugout, stand, bleacher or over any boundary or barrier, such as a fence, rope, chalk line, or a pre-game determined imaginary boundary line of the field of play. Falling into does not include merely running against such object.
3. A fielder who is out of play may come back to live ball territory and make a valid play.
4. A collapsible fence is considered in play.

B. A Catch shall not be credited when

1. The fielder traps the ball.
2. A fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with anything other than the hand(s) or properly worn glove. A cap, protector, mask, pocket or other part of the uniform may not be used to catch the ball. A ball prevented from hitting the ground by a player's equipment (providing it is in its proper place) or body shall not be ruled caught until the ball is securely held in the player's hand(s) or glove/mitt.

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3. The fielder uses any equipment or part of her uniform that is displaced from its proper position to play on a batted ball.
4. A fielder is out of play while:
 - a. One foot is entirely touching out of play. Note: an out of play line is in play.
 - b. Any other part of the body is touching out of play.
 - c. In the air after being out of play.
5. The fielder is standing on the fence as it is lying on the ground beyond the original plane of the home-run fence when they contact the ball.
6. The ball strikes anything or anyone other than another defensive player while it is in flight even though it is then caught by a defensive player.
7. Immediately after a catch, the fielder collides with another player, Umpire or fence, or falls to the ground and fails to maintain possession of the ball.

Rewrite/Rearrange Section; Move definition of trap to separate definition

Rule 3 Definition - Coach's Box - NEW

The coach's box is the area to which the two base coaches (one per box) are restricted prior to release of the pitch.

Inserts Standard Definition

Rule 3 Definition - Trap - NEW

A batted fly ball or line drive is considered trapped if it hits the ground or a fence on a short hop before being caught. A thrown ball is considered trapped if it is caught but the ball is on the ground and the glove/mitt/hand is over, rather than under, it and the fielder does not have secure possession. A pitched ball is considered trapped if it is a strike but touches the ground on a short hop before being caught by the catcher.

Establishes existing criteria in its own definition.

Rule 5 Sec 9. Injured Player - Apparently Unconscious

Change "unconscious" to "Apparently unconscious".

Easier definition to apply. Consistent with other associations.

Rule 6.1.K. Pitcher time to release

Modify Rule 6.1.K: Once the ball has been returned to the pitcher **to prepare for the next pitch** or after the Umpire calls "Play", the pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch.

Added "to prepare for the next pitch" and Reworded for Clarification

Rule 7 Sec 4. Batting Position.

Current Rule 7.4.A

Prior to the pitch, the batter must have both feet completely within the lines of the batter's box. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside the lines prior to the pitch.

Change to:

Prior to the pitch, the batter must have both feet completely **in** the batter's box. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside the lines prior to the pitch.

Reworded for Clarification

Rule 8 Sec 3. Courtesy Runner

Current Rule 8.3.F

The courtesy runner is not permitted to be used if there is a Designated Hitter being used for the pitcher or catcher.

Change to:

The courtesy runner is not permitted to be used for the DP unless the DP is the pitcher or catcher of record.

Reworded for Clarification

Rule 8.17 and 8.18.I - tagging runner

Make Rules 8.17.D and 8.18.I consistent regarding tagging runner

Current Rule 8 Sec 17.D

The batter-runner is out:

If, after a third strike or a fair hit, any fielder, while holding the ball, touches the batter-runner before the batter-runner touches first base;

Modification

If, after a third strike or a fair hit, any fielder tags out the batter-runner before the batter-runner touches first base;

Current Rule 8.18.I

Touched by a live ball securely held by a fielder or is touched by a fielder's glove or hand with the live ball held therein while the runner is not touching base.

Modification

Tagged out while the runner is not touching base.

ARTICLE IV. INDIVIDUAL PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

Current Sec 10.

All players participating in the USSSA Fast Pitch youth tournament play shall have proof of age in possession of their team manager at all times. Proof of age must be verified by a government issued document that identifies the player by name, gender and birth date. **Failure to produce a copy of such document upon demand by and deemed non-fraudulent by a tournament official will result in the offending team** losing the game, being eliminated from the tournament, being placed last in the standings and forfeiting all awards, sponsors travel money and tournament berths that would have been awarded at the tournament.

Modification of third sentence

Failure to produce a copy of such document upon demand by a tournament official or producing documents deemed fraudulent will result in the offending team...