



# **Pacific Coast Region 2025 Junior Olympic Policies and Procedures**

Revised December 7, 2024

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## PACIFIC COAST REGION MAP



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Hawaii Association  
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Sacramento Association  
San Francisco Association  
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Arizona Association

[www.usasoftball.com](http://www.usasoftball.com)  
[www.usasoftballcentralcal.com](http://www.usasoftballcentralcal.com)  
[www.usasoftballhawaii.org](http://www.usasoftballhawaii.org)  
[www.usasoftballnevada.org](http://www.usasoftballnevada.org)  
[www.norcalusasoftball.org](http://www.norcalusasoftball.org)  
[www.usasoftballsacramento.org](http://www.usasoftballsacramento.org)  
[www.usasoftballsanfrancisco.com](http://www.usasoftballsanfrancisco.com)  
[www.usasoftballsocal.com](http://www.usasoftballsocal.com)  
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## **WHAT IS USA SOFTBALL?**

USA Softball [formerly known as the Amateur Softball Association (ASA)] is an independent and unique organization. It is one of the largest and fastest growing amateur sports associations in America today. Its membership is composed of men, women, girls and boys who are dedicated to amateur sports. More than 40 million adults and youngsters play annually in the United States some form of competitive and recreational softball and the majority of them play USA Softball. Softball is the largest team participation sport in the country.

To paint a picture of USA Softball and its activities, imagine a colorful progression of dedication, effort and growth. To understand its uniqueness and its strength, you will realize that USA Softball is not only improving the status of its members and the game, but it is also developing and sharing with softball players everywhere a program to develop strong minds and bodies. To clearly understand its accomplishments you must first realize what USA Softball is, what it does, and the goals it seeks.

USA Softball is a non-government, non-partisan and non-profit organization, accepting all that qualify as amateurs, regardless of sex, color, creed or national origin, sexual orientation or ancestry. It is an organization of men and women who voluntarily associate themselves in the interest of amateur sports, particularly softball.

USA Softball is affiliated with other national amateur organizations, but in no way dependent upon any other organization for policy or administration. Its finances are expended only to the improvement or expansion of USA Softball and its membership.

Since 1933, USA Softball has developed, provided and promoted softball on an organized basis. Softball, once a sport that was played under no less than 12 different sets of rules on a national basis, today is played under one set of rules in more than 120 countries. The standardization and uniformity of the playing rules that USA Softball has brought to softball are primarily the reason why softball today is played the world over on such an organized basis. It is interesting to note that many other amateur sports have followed softball's lead.

Those who play softball come from many different walks of life; that is what makes the sport so unique, interesting and exciting. It is not uncommon to find a doctor, school teacher, factory worker or store owner all playing on the same team or against each other, and all with an equal desire to participate and be part of a sport that, although it does not capture headlines or TV spotlight, is still exciting and interests participants and spectators.

USA Softball takes great pride in the part it has played to develop and promote softball. It is proud of the role it has been given to further support and help in the development of the game as an international sport. Through the dedicated efforts of its thousands of member teams, umpires and administrators, USA Softball is part of an organized sport where today 50 million youngsters and adults play the game in more than 120 countries.

For over 80 years, USA Softball has developed and promoted organized Championship Play softball. As the governing body for the sport in the United States, it carries an important responsibility to the participating teams, players, officials and sponsors to regulate the competition and to assure fairness and equal opportunity to all who participate under the USA Softball banner.

## **USA SOFTBALL OBJECTIVES**

- To promote amateur softball for all persons regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation or ancestry.
- To establish uniform softball rules and regulations.
- To provide proper safeguards in accordance with the spirit of true sportsmanship and establish principles for ethical behavior and matters relating to conflict of interest as provided by the USA Softball Council and Board of Directors.
- To encourage the union of all eligible teams, organizations or groups into such separate associations with active membership in USA Softball as may, from time to time, be deemed best adapted to advance the cause of amateur softball.
- To establish and maintain allied membership, alliances with non-profit associations or organizations devoted wholly or partially to the promotion and development of the game of softball on an Association, Regional or National Level.
- To promote and conduct annual amateur softball Championship Play events.
- To educate and train with the proper skills of amateur softball play and rules of the game through promoting, organizing, and conducting clinics, seminars and training courses.

## **PROMOTING GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP AND FUN**

"An investment for softball's future". That is the byword of USA Softball's Junior Olympic Program, one of the largest youth programs in the United States.

Through this program, youngsters 10 to 18 years of age are introduced to the great game of softball ... the game for everyone and the No. 1 team participant sport in the United States.

In playing softball, youngsters learn sportsmanship, the benefits of keeping physically fit and esprit de corps while, at the same time, developing their own abilities and personalities to the fullest.

And, most of all, this is a program that is fun. The element that makes youth sports "fun" is participation. And each year more than one million youngsters participate in USA Softball Junior Olympic Softball. This participation helps lead to a positive attitude toward sports.

Youngsters compete in league play, USA Softball sanctioned invitational and Championship Play tournaments in both fastpitch and slowpitch. USA Softball conducts 51 prestigious Junior Olympic National Championships each year.

USA Softball commissioners appoint youth commissioners to run individual Junior Olympic programs in cities and towns across the United States. Properly organized and planned programs can provide an enjoyable atmosphere and healthy attitude for youngsters wanting to play softball.

Once involved with the USA Softball Junior Olympic Program, youngsters will experience the thrill and excitement of competition that will last a lifetime.

## **PACIFIC COAST REGION 10 - USA SOFTBALL**

Organizing and affiliating your league as a member of USA Softball makes you a vital part of the finest softball organization in the world. Your teams will enjoy the following benefits:

1. Unified and Uniform Eligibility Rules

All Pacific Coast Region 10 USA Softball teams are governed by the same eligibility rules, thus ensuring your team and league fair competition with teams outside your league. The Pacific Coast Region 14 serves softball teams the same as the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) provide standard eligibility for high school and college teams.

2. Uniform Playing Rules

All USA Softball teams compete under the official softball rules as adopted by the USA Softball. Members are invited to contribute to the development of softball by submitting to their local commissioner any rules, changes or policy suggestions they may have.

3. Qualified Umpires

All USA Softball umpires must pass an annual written examination before receiving tournament assignments. It is also recommended that all umpires attend either a National or Regional School in order to be eligible for assignment to regional or national tournaments. By using USA Softball registered umpires exclusively in your league, you will assure it of having the best!

4. Guaranteed Amateur Eligibility

USA Softball is an allied member of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and member of the U.S. Olympic Committee. The association adheres to regulations that will guarantee the amateur status of its players. This is extremely important to young players who have high school and college eligibility remaining.

5. Protest Arbitration

The Pacific Coast Region 10 will assist in the settlement of any protests between members, upon request. The Regional Director, Regional JO Commissioner, or Regional Umpire-in-Chief will make rulings.

6. Invitational Tournaments

USA Softball sanctions invitational tournaments which are open to all USA Softball registered teams. These tournaments are conducted under USA Softball playing and eligibility rules to ensure fair standards for all competing teams.

7. Publications

Each registered team's manager will receive the official USA Softball Rule Book. Training videos, booklets, and manuals are available through the National Office. Please contact your local Junior Olympic Commissioner for details.

8. Insurance

Insurance can be obtained easily. Your local association will provide details upon request. Tournament/clinic, officers' and directors', and equipment insurance is also available upon request. Contact your local Junior Olympic Commissioner. By joining USA Softball your league/team is helping our association improve and promote the game. The future of softball for you and your league/team is dependent upon growth. HELP US HELP YOU! Registration can be obtained through your Junior Olympic Commissioner.

9. Championship Competition

USA Softball Pacific Coast Region 10 Olympic Program conducts tournament competition in four different classifications.

- The "Gold" program will qualify teams for advancement from Regional and National qualifying tournaments to the USA Softball National Championships.
- The "A" program will qualify teams for advancement to USA Softball Western National or USA Softball National Championships.
- The "B" program qualifies teams for advancement to Western National Championships.
- The "C" program qualifies teams for Pacific Coast Regional Championships.

## **USA SOFTBALL REGION 10 CLASSIFICATIONS**

### **GOLD**

Girl's Fast Pitch 18 & Under Gold

Girl's Fast Pitch 16 & Under Gold

### **CLASS A**

Girl's Fast Pitch "A" 18 & Under

Girl's Fast Pitch "A" 16 & Under

Girl's Fast Pitch "A" 14 & Under

Girl's Fast Pitch "A" 12 & Under

Girl's Fast Pitch "A" 10 & Under

### **CLASS B**

Girl's Fast Pitch "B" 18 & Under

Girl's Fast Pitch "B" 16 & Under

Girl's Fast Pitch "B" 14 & Under

Girl's Fast Pitch "B" 12 & Under

Girl's Fast Pitch "B" 10 & Under

### **CLASS C**

Girl's Fast Pitch "C" 12 & Under

Girl's Fast Pitch "C" 10 & Under

Girl's Fast Pitch "C" 8 & Under

## WHAT IS AN ASSOCIATION?

The geographical area of the United States is divided into 10 regions. The Pacific Coast Region is made up of the states of California, Nevada, Hawaii and Arizona, which is divided into nine associations. Eligibility rules start with USA Softball National Codes. These are listed in the Official USA Softball Rule Book. The National rules that govern Championship Tournaments are very broad in scope; therefore the Pacific Coast Region clarifies these rules as they pertain to our Region. Regional rules may not conflict with National Codes. Associations, in turn, clarify Regional rules to better suit our situations. The Association rules may not conflict with Pacific Coast Regional Rules. It's very similar to our Federal, State, and Local system of government.

Each Association is represented by a Commissioner who acts as a liaison between their Association and the National Office of USA Softball.

The nine associations in the Pacific Coast Region are:

- Northern California Association
- Central California Association
- Southern California Association
- Sacramento Association
- San Francisco Association
- Hawaii Association
- Nevada Association
- Arizona Association

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Junior Olympic Commissioners:

- The local Junior Olympic Commissioner has ultimate responsibility to verify the classification and eligibility of all teams wishing to participate in any USA Softball event.
- The local Junior Olympic Commissioner retains the right to reclassify any of their teams based upon that team's performance in any tournament (s).

Team Manager:

- The manager is the team representative that must have control of their team at all times on and off the field.
- The manager is responsible to verify the team and player's eligibility to the best of their knowledge.
- The manager shall be prepared to provide proof of registration, insurance and age with photo identification at every tournament for each and every rostered player and must show proof of ACE Certification for at least one team staff member.
- The manager of any team found to be in violation of these policies may be disqualified from participation in USA Softball play for one full year.

Recreational League President (or Chief Softball Administrator):

- The president/chief administrator is responsible to verify the league's player/team eligibility to the best of his/her ability.
- The president/chief administrator shall notify the local JO Commissioner or his/her representative of any possible infractions.

## **QUALIFYING FOR NATIONALS**

Each one of the nine Associations within Pacific Coast Region 10 are required to conduct Association tournaments to determine who will represent the Association at the next level of Championship Play. This requirement is established to ensure a fair representation of our Region from every Association.

### **Gold Program:**

To Qualify for Gold Nationals:

16 & Under and 18 & Under Class A teams may participate in any Gold National Qualifying event and then have the ability to return to the Class A level provided the team did not earn a berth at the Gold level. "Gold" qualifying is done through the National Qualifier process. Exception: The 18 & Under "Gold" program may add a Regional Qualifier. "Gold" qualifiers will be held throughout the country and each territory will host a minimum of two events. These events are open to any USA Softball team. All teams participating in a "Gold" qualifier will be eligible for their respective "A" Western Nationals. Teams failing to qualify "Gold" and those that passed on their respective Association Championships to participate in a "Gold" Qualifier, may enter the "A" Regional or National Qualifying event for the opportunity to earn a USA Softball berth in the "A" classification.

### **A Program:**

To Qualify for Western Nationals

To qualify for Western Nationals, teams must participate in their Association championship.

To Qualify for USA Softball National Championships

To qualify for USA Softball National Championships, teams must participate in any two Region 10 USA Softball Sanctioned Tournaments, one must be their respective Association Championship.

### **B Program:**

In the "B" program, the top two placements of each Association Tournament qualify directly for the Western "B" National Championship. Several Associations have additional direct berths. Please check with your Association's JO Commissioner.

### **C Program:**

In the "C" program, the top two finishers of each Association Tournament qualify directly for the "C" Regional Championship. Several Associations have additional direct berths. Please check with your Association's JO Commissioner.

**2025 CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY EVENTS** (dates and locations are subject to change)

<b>Girls “A” Fastpitch Western National Championships</b>		<b>Host City/State</b>
Girl’s 18U “A” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 16U “A” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 14U “A” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 12U “A” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 10U “A” Fastpitch		
<b>Girls “B” Fastpitch Western National Championships</b>		<b>Host City/State</b>
Girl’s 18U “B” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 16U “B” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 14U “B” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 12U “B” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 10U “B” Fastpitch		
<b>Girls “A” USA Softball National Championship Finals</b>		<b>Host City/State</b>
Girl’s 18U Gold Fastpitch		
Girl’s 16U Gold Fastpitch		
Girl’s 18U “A” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 16U “A” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 14U “A” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 12U “A” Fastpitch		
Girl’s 10U “A” Fastpitch		



## CODE OF CONDUCT

In any sports organization, there must be rules and regulations to ensure fair and equitable competition. The National USA Softball Championship Softball Program provides regulations, known as “Codes” that will be respected and followed by all members. In addition to the National Codes, Pacific Coast Region 10 and the local Associations may establish rules and regulations. These rules and regulations shall supplement the National Codes. They shall serve and protect member teams and players in situations that are unique to our area and further define the codes where necessary. Standards of conduct are part of the National Codes and Pacific Coast Region 10 Rules and Regulations. As a member of USA Softball, every member shall respect these standards. No manager, coach, player, or other individual(s) affiliated with the team shall commit any of the following:

1. **Unsportsmanlike conduct** or any derogatory acts on or off the playing field.
2. **Verbal or physical attack** or threat upon an USA Softball official or umpire.
3. **Recruitment of a player** while he/she is a member of another USA Softball team during the season. No coach, manager, player, or other individual (s) affiliated with the team shall entice a player to change teams until that player’s team has completed Championship Play.
4. **Destruction of property** belonging to another. If an infraction occurs during a Championship Tournament, the team may be ineligible for further championship play. Penalty is suspension from USA Softball tournament competition and payment for damages must be made before the team is eligible. If flagrant, a minimum of one (1) year disqualification may be imposed.
5. **Debts owed:** Non-payment of team-incurred debts owed to the Associations or the Pacific Coast Region. Any other indebtedness is governed by local association.
6. **Failure** to provide an itemized and accurate financial statement to players or parents.
7. **Non-sufficient funds:** Writing checks with non-sufficient funds or account closed checks to a USA Softball official, umpire, member team or individual. Penalty is restitution plus any additional charges. If payment is not made, the responsible party is suspended until restitution.
8. **Commission of fraud or larceny** perpetrated against a USA Softball official or USA Member.
9. **Falsifying an official USA Softball document:** Playing under an assumed name or falsifying an official USA Softball document. Penalty: If discovered while participating in a Championship Tournament, forfeiture of game(s), possible team or player removal from tournament and/or suspension of individual at fault.
10. **USA Softball logos or trademarks:** Use of any USA Softball logos or trademarks without expressed permission.
11. **Commission of any acts** that are contrary to the objectives and purposes of USA Softball.
12. **Acts of disqualification:** Any other acts of disqualification as listed in USA Softball Code Article 305. Penalties for violation of the Pacific Coast Region “Code of Conduct” or any other USA Softball Code violation (s) listed in the USA Softball Code will be determined by the Association Commissioner or his/her designee. A hearing will follow the procedures outlined in USA Softball Code Article 305B – 305E.

## JUNIOR OLYMPIC AGE QUALIFICATIONS

Players of younger age classification may play in older age classifications, but an older age classification player may not play in the younger age classification.

Match birth month (top line) with year of birth. The player's age and division is indicated on the right.

SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	AGE	DIVISION
2016	2016	2016	2016	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	7	8U
2015	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	8	8U
2014	2014	2014	2014	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	9	10U
2013	2013	2013	2013	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	10	10U
2012	2012	2012	2012	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	11	12U
2011	2011	2011	2011	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	12	12U
2010	2010	2010	2010	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	13	14U
2009	2009	2009	2009	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	14	14U
2008	2008	2008	2008	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	15	16U
2007	2007	2007	2007	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	16	16U
2006	2006	2006	2006	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	17	18U
2005	2005	2005	2005	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	18	18U

## CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY

Championship Play is a tournament or competition from which the winner or the winner and other selected teams may advance to higher levels of play of USA Softball (see Article 508, Levels of Championship Play). The following events are considered Championship Play:

- Local Association Championships (including District or County Championships)
- Regional Championships
- Area Championships
- National Qualifiers
- Territorial Qualifying Tournament
- National Tournaments
- National Championship Finals

## ROSTERS

Teams must compete with the same roster in all Championship Play, except teams are allowed to pick up three players when advancing in Championship Play.

### 1. Number of Players

A maximum of 20 players, including pick-up players, in fastpitch and slowpitch will be permitted on a team roster.

### 2. Roster Deadline

- The roster deadline for Championship Play is 24 hours prior to the start of Championship Play. Each Association may set an earlier deadline date. Check with your JO Commissioner.
- Once a team has competed in any championship event, the participating players are frozen to that roster and may not compete with another team until the original team is no longer eligible for Championship Play. If a player leaves a team after Championship Play participation, they may not join another team until the original team is no longer eligible for Championship Play *unless a Player Release Form has been approved by the Commissioner and/or his/her designee*.
- Once a team qualifies and accepts the berth, that team's roster is then frozen and the only way additional players can be added to the team is on a Pick-Up Player Form.

### 3. Junior Olympic Rosters

Players may participate in more than one Junior Olympic Division (Girls Fast or Slow pitch) of play, but are limited to only one classification (A, B or C and 10, 12, 14, 16, 18) within a division of play (USA Softball Code Article 301).

- A player may participate as a regular rostered player on only one team within a division in championship play during a season.
- Electing to Participate. Once electing to participate in championship play on a

team registered in a local association, the player may not play in the same division in any other local association during the current year.

## **GENERAL RULES FOR PICK-UP PLAYERS**

Fastpitch and slowpitch teams are permitted to pick-up three players per Article 303 as follows:

1. The team adding pick-up players must select eligible roster members from USA Softball registered teams
2. Pick-up players must have played for a USA Softball-registered team during the current season. EXCEPTION: Senior Slow Pitch.
3. Pick-up players must be selected only from USA Softball registered teams no longer eligible for championship play. EXCEPTION: A player that has been released from a team's championship roster prior in accordance with the Player Release form.
4. Pick-up players must be from the team's same or lower classification. EXCEPTION: Players who are age eligible may be picked up by a lower age classification team. CLARIFICATION: In Junior Olympic play there are two types of classification, one type of classification is Gold, Class A and Class B; the other type of classification is age classification, 18-Under, 16-Under, 14-Under, 12-Under and 10-Under. Therefore, as an example, a player who has competed on a Junior Olympic Girls' Fastpitch 16-Under team is an eligible pick-up player for any team below the 16-Under age classification if she meets that age classification criteria. Another example, once a player participates on a Class A team, she is not eligible to participate in Class B even if moving up in the age classification.
5. Players (Adult and Junior Olympics) whose teams have qualified to compete in the highest level tournaments within a classification shall not be eligible pick-up players. CLARIFICATION: A player who has competed in any Junior Olympic Girls' FastPitch National Championship Finals is not an eligible pick-up player for any other Junior Olympic Girls' National Championship Finals.
6. No player may be picked up for National Qualifiers, Junior Olympic Hall of Fame Tournaments or National Gold Qualifying tournaments.
7. In Junior Olympic divisions of play, a pick-up player may not be substituted for after participation.
8. A player may play as a pick-up player with only one team other than their rostered USA Softball registered team within a division in a season.
9. Teams adding pick-up players must submit a completed official USA Softball pick-up player form attached to the official roster before the team plays in the tournament.

## **PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

1. A player may play in any Association during the current year.
2. Once electing to participate in Championship Play on a team registered in an Association, the player may not play in the same division in any other Association during the current year. Exception: Transfer of Employment (Article 501E) and pick-up players (Article 503 A1).
3. A player may participate as a regular rostered player on only one team within a division in Championship Play during a season.
4. Protest of player eligibility can be made or appealed at any time. Eligibility protests cannot be waived by local notice.
5. Player Identification: Proof of Age. A Junior Olympic player must provide proof of age in Junior Olympic divisions (see USA Softball Code Article 301 D 04).
6. Junior Olympic Gold 18u Fastpitch teams may not participate in any classification less than 18u Gold.
7. Players of younger age classification may play in older age classifications, but an older age classification player may not play in the younger age classification.
8. Teams participating in “B” Championship Play must fulfill all sections of the USA Softball Code pertaining to Championship Play to the same extent as teams participating in “A” or “Gold” Championship events.
9. Teams participating in “C” Championship Play must fulfill those sections of the Pacific Coast Region 10 Policies and Procedures pertaining to Championship Play.

## **TRAVEL TEAMS – CLASS A and GOLD**

1. Purpose  
The purpose of a USA Softball Class A/Gold Program is to provide a competitive tournament system designed to develop softball players to build their skills and excel at their highest desired level of competition.
2. Eligibility  
Class A and A-II Teams must conform to the following definitions:
  - a. A team must register with the local association in which the greatest numbers of its players reside, and this number must be retained for the remainder of the season.
  - b. A player may play in any Association during the calendar year.
  - c. A player may participate as a regular rostered player on only one team.
  - d. USA Softball offers Class A and A-II divisions for 10 & Under, 12 & Under, 14 & Under, 16 & Under, 18 & Under or a modified version thereof approved by the local USA Softball Association.
  - e. All players and team staff on the team must be USA Softball registered.
  - f. All team staff on the team must be USA Softball background checked.
  - g. The Manager shall testify to all eligibility and responsibility requirements as outlined in this document.

3. Classification

All teams in the Travel Program will follow the classification procedures as outlined below.

- a. All teams in the travel program are classified as A or A-II teams.
- b. USA Softball offers Gold divisions for the 16 & Under and 18 & Under divisions and teams must qualify for Gold by qualifying through one of the qualifying tournaments.

4. Participation

Teams must conform to the following participation requirements in order to remain eligible for the A Program.

- a. Teams may participate in any USA Softball Sanctioned A Tournament.
- b. Teams may participate in any USA Softball Sanctioned Gold Tournament.
- c. Teams may participate in any other Association Sanctioned Tournament.
- d. Teams may not participate in USA Softball Sanctioned B or C Tournaments.

5. Championship Play

Teams may choose to enter Championship Play to represent their team with the intent to move forward to the next level of competition if so qualified.

- a. Teams are eligible to participate in the A Association Championships or State Tournament (as determined by your local USA Softball Association). Teams finishing in a qualifying position will advance to one of the following:
  - USA Softball National Championship Finals
  - USA Softball Western National Championships
  - USA Softball Regional Championship
- b. Teams are eligible to participate in National Qualifying tournaments to earn a spot to Nationals outside their local qualifying process. Teams finishing in a qualifying position will advance to the USA Softball Nationals. Note: Pick-Up players are not allowed for National Qualifiers.
- c. Teams are eligible to participate in Gold Qualifying tournaments to earn a Gold designation/berth. Teams finishing in a qualifying position will advance to the USA Softball Gold Nationals.
- d. Teams attending Regionals, Western Nationals or Nationals are allowed three pick-up players as defined by the USA Softball Code (see Pick-Up Player Section).

## **RECREATIONAL LEAGUE**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of a USA Softball Recreational League is to provide a local community with an organized softball program open to any interested player. This is a recreation based program designed to encourage participation and provide an introductory level to the game of softball.

### **2. Eligibility**

Recreational leagues must conform to the following definitions:

- a. An organized league where participation is open to any interested youth.
- b. Leagues must use a draft, draw or other acceptable and approved method to ensure a distribution of talent among all the teams within the league.
- c. League offers playing divisions for 6 & Under, 8 & Under, 10 & Under, 12 & Under, 14 & Under, 16 & Under, 18 & Under or a modified version thereof approved by the local USA Softball Association.
- d. Leagues include a minimum of 4 teams within the same age classification or must be approved by the local USA Softball Association.
- e. All players and team staff in the league must be USA Softball registered.
- f. All team staff in the league must be USA Softball Background checked.
- g. The League President shall testify to all eligibility and responsibility requirements as outlined in this document.

## ***SELECT PROGRAM (CLASS B)***

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Select (Class B) Program is to establish an opportunity for teams to play competitive softball while remaining with their recreational league. The Select program is still a recreation based program and must be managed by an approved Recreational league. Each association must oversee and approve their Select Program.

### **2. Eligibility**

Teams must conform to ALL of the following definitions of eligibility in order to be eligible.

- a. All Select Players must be drafted onto a recreational League
- b. All Select Players must be drafted onto a recreational league team as defined in **Recreational League 2. Eligibility b.**
- c. Select team participation must not interfere with any league scheduled activities. Select team players must play a minimum of 75% of their league season.
- d. The team must have some form of try-outs or demonstration of skill that is announced to the entire league membership.
- e. Any league player that participates with any other team outside of their recreational team league OR Select team after January 1st forfeits their eligibility for Select. Players can appeal their eligibility to the JO Commissioner.
- f. The team must represent a specific age division of 10 & Under, 12 & Under, or 14 & Under.

- g. In the 14 & Under division, high school players are eligible to return to the league that they participated in during the previous calendar year ONLY if no existing league player is removed from the team.
- h. The team must follow all requirements outlined in the PARTICIPATION portion of this document.

*note: Select Teams are not eligible for Class C.*

### 3. Classification

All teams in the Select Program will be classified as USA Softball B teams regardless of league size. Teams may request reclassification to their Junior Olympic Commissioner.

### 4. Participation

- a. After January 1st of the current season teams must receive permission from their Junior Olympic Commissioner to participate in any USA Softball Tournament or Non USA Softball Tournament/Event. Teams participating in these activities without permission could affect their Class B eligibility.
- b. After March 15th of the current season teams may not participate outside their Association approved Select Schedule.

### 5. Championship Play

Teams may choose to enter Championship Play to represent their League with the intent to move forward to the next level of competition if so qualified.

- a. Teams are eligible to participate in the B Association Championships or State Tournament (as determined by your local USA Softball Association). Teams finishing in a qualifying position will advance to the Class B Western National Championship.
- b. Teams attending the Class B Western National Championship are allowed 3 pick-up players as defined by the USA Softball Code (see Pick-Up Player Section).

## ***ALL-STAR PROGRAM (CLASS B or C)***

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the All-Star Program is to provide an opportunity for the League to designate stand-out players to represent their league in a summer tournament program.

### 2. Eligibility

All-Star teams must conform to the following definitions of eligibility in order to be eligible for the All-Star Program.

- a. The team must be approved by and represent an approved single Recreational League OR follow the guidelines as needed for the Interleague All-Stars (see below).
- b. The team must select players through an approved All-Star selection process as defined in the league's operating policies and approved by the local USA Softball Association.
- c. The team must represent a specific age division including 8 & Under, 10 & Under, 12 & Under, 14 & Under.



- d. All players must have participated in 75% of their recreational league season.
- e. Any player that participates with any other team outside of the recreational league after March 15th forfeits their eligibility for All-Stars.
- f. The All-Star team shall not try-out, select, announce, practice, meet, or play together before the last Saturday in April.
- g. If the league selects a single league team, this team must meet the requirements above in which the league uses a fair distribution of talent.
- h. High school players are eligible to return to the league that they participated in during the previous calendar year. Teams may not have more than five (5) high school players on their roster.
- i. The team must follow all requirements outlined in the PARTICIPATION portion of this document.

*note: Teams that do not participate in a recreational league season are ineligible to be Class B or Class Classification*

### 3. Classification

All teams in the All-Star Program are classified as B teams. The JO Commissioner is responsible for re-classifying teams to the “C” classification who cannot compete at the B level.

### 4. Participation

Teams must conform to the following participation requirements in order to remain eligible for the All- Star program.

- a. Teams may participate in any USA Softball Sanctioned B or C Tournament.
- b. Teams must have the approval of the Junior Olympic Commissioner to participate in any Non USA Softball Sanctioned Events.

### 5. Championship Play

Teams may choose to enter Championship Play to represent their League with the intent to move forward to the next level of competition if so qualified.

- a. Teams are eligible to participate in the C Association Championships. Teams finishing in a qualifying position will advance to the C Regional.
- b. Teams attending the Class C Regional are eligible to pick-up 3 players out of the C Association Championship OR their original recreational league and approved by the local USA Softball Association.

## **INTERLEAGUE ALL-STAR PROGRAM**

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Interleague All-Star Policy is to assist the small leagues that do not have enough willing players to create an All-Star team to compete in USA Softball’s Championship Season.

### 2. Eligibility

Interleague All-Star teams must conform to the following definitions of eligibility in addition to the

eligibility requirements for the All-Star Program as listed above.

- a. All interleague All-Star play is subject to sanctioning by the local USA Softball Association.
- b. Interleague teams must compete in an approved interleague schedule during the regular season to be eligible for interleague All-Stars.
- c. Eligible interleagues must have an open and announced selection process with participants recorded.
- d. Leagues participating in interleague play having sufficient players to form their own All-Star team cannot participate in interleague All-Stars. Exception: Players not making their home league's All-Star team may participate in interleague All-Stars only if the interleague team does not have enough players to form a team and only when ALL other players have been selected.

3. Classification

All teams in the Interleague All-Star Program must adhere to the classification guidelines of the Region as outlined in the All-Star Classification section.

4. Participation

All teams in the Interleague All-Star Program must adhere to the participation guidelines of the Region as outlined in the All-Star Participation section.

5. Championship Play

All teams in the Interleague All-Star Program must adhere to the Championship Play guidelines of the Region as outlined in the All-Star Championship Play section.

## **RURAL TEAMS (remotely located teams)**

1. Team Eligibility

- a. Includes 10 & Under, 12 & Under, 14 & Under, 16 & Under and 18 & Under age classifications,
- b. Team must be currently registered with USA Softball.
- c. Players on the team must be residents of a single community/geographical area that is located a minimum of twenty-five (25) miles from the nearest USA Softball recreational league in which they are eligible to participate.

2. Player Eligibility

See General "B/C" Policies and Procedures.

3. Pick-up Players

Three (3) pick-up players must meet the same criteria that formed the team. Once qualified for National Championship Play, pick-up players may come from within their Association. Pick-up players may be selected only from teams that are no longer eligible for Championship Play.

4. Classification

All teams are initially classified as "B".

## **HIGH SCHOOL AGE TEAMS (14 & Under, 16 & Under, 18 & Under “B”)**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of the High School Division is to provide competition and championship tournaments for players who are not of the Junior Olympic “A” caliber. It provides a post California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) summer program that addresses the needs of players who are of high school age and wish to increase their skill to benefit their league, their high school team, and themselves.

### **2. Team Eligibility**

- a. Team rosters may include up to 20 players including pickup players.
- b. Teams may not try out, practice or participate together before the last Saturday in April.
- c. Individual players who participate on an A team after March 31<sup>st</sup> of the current season are not eligible to participate.
- d. Teams shall not have more than five players who have participated with any travel type team at any time after March 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year (not including a High School team).
- e. Teams are eligible to participate in Gold or A level invitational tournaments during the season, but may be reclassified by the Jr. Olympic Commissioner or designee based on their performance in these tournaments.
- f. Reclassified teams may appeal their reclassification to the Association’s Junior Olympic Classification Committee.
- g. Teams that participate in A National Qualifying events will NOT be eligible to participate in High School Division Championship Tournaments.
- h. Teams competing in USA Softball Championship Play shall abide by the sections of the USA Softball Codes, Pacific Coast Region 10 and local Association guidelines pertaining to Championship Play.
- i. Three (3) pick-up players must meet the same criteria that formed the team. Once qualified for National Championship Play, pick-up players may come from within their Association. Pick-up players may be selected only from teams that are no longer eligible for Championship Play.

## **CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT RULES (UPDATE TO INCLUDE CURRENT CODE AND RULES)**

USA Softball codes and playing rules will apply as outlined in the current official guide with the following exceptions:

1. Regional championship tournaments shall be a minimum of double elimination.
2. Teams having qualified for nationals may enter regional championships only if they forfeit their berth to nationals.
3. Player uniform requirements shall be enforced as listed in the USA Softball Code (Class A teams) or as allowed by the Pacific Coast Regional Guidelines (Class B teams).
4. Teams must check in with an USA Softball official 30 minutes prior to scheduled game time.

5. Game time is forfeit time. No grace period.
6. If the tournament schedule is delayed, it shall be the responsibility of each manager to contact the USA Softball representative for possible game time and field location changes.
7. The team listed on top of the bracket shall occupy the third base dugout. Exception: A team playing in double header on the same field shall stay in the same dugout.
8. Home team shall be determined by a coin toss, at the time line-up cards are submitted.
9. Game balls will be supplied by the tournament officials and are the only ball allowed in the tournament. If violated, the pitcher and head coach will be disqualified from the game per Rule 1 of Definitions. If the violation occurs again, the team at fault will forfeit the game.
10. Infield practice allowed only as determined by the tournament director.
11. Playing rule protests will be settled prior to the next pitch. Player eligibility protests shall be made in a timely manner and according to USA Softball Code and tournament ground rule.
12. A Run Rule shall be in effect according to USA Softball Code and Pacific Coast Region guidelines.
13. The Tie Breaker Rule shall be in effect according to Pacific Coast Region guidelines.
14. Time Limit Rule shall be in effect according to Pacific Coast Region guidelines.
15. Use of tobacco products is prohibited at Junior Olympic Tournaments.
16. No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs are permitted on or near the fields, including bleachers and spectator areas.
17. Umpires (during games) and/or tournament officials shall have the responsibility of ejecting coaches, players, or spectators for abusive language or other acts that are contrary to the objectives and purposes of USA Softball. A warning for the first offense MAY be issued at the umpire's/officials discretion. The second offense by coaches or players shall result in ejection of the responsible individual(s) from the game. Second, and subsequent, offenses by a spectator shall result in ejection of the (1) head coach, (2) coaching staff, (3) players.

The Pacific Coast Region requires that every team obtain medical and liability insurance for the softball season.

USA Softball Code mandates that all Junior Olympic personnel assisting in the dugout must complete a USA Softball background check for the current year. The Pacific Coast Region requires that all team personnel will visibly display proof of USA Softball registration and the current year's background check during Pacific Region 10 Championship Play.

Because they have volunteered their time, many volunteer coaches never stop to think that they may be held legally liable for their actions in coaching. Coaches, even if they are volunteers, are responsible for the safety of the young people in their care. If proven negligent, coaches may be held liable for physical harm incurred by players in their charge.

For a very low premium, USA Softball Junior Olympic Teams may obtain \$250,000 excess accident insurance and a \$2,000,000 liability insurance policy that would cover each player, manager, coach or sponsor during games, practices, group travel to and from these events and others including tournaments and fundraising events, etc. Additional insured, such as field owners, may also be added to your liability insurance policy at no additional charge. Furthermore, if all teams within a league purchase the liability insurance, the interests of the league and all league officers are automatically

covered at no additional cost.

While USA Softball does not require each team to obtain insurance as a requirement for membership, any team, organization or community volunteering their softball facilities for a USA Softball sponsored tournament or event may have their facilities covered by USA Softball's liability policy. See the local Junior Olympic Commissioner for additional details.

## **BENEFITS FROM BELONGING TO USA SOFTBALL**

- Standardized playing rules. As the governing body of softball in the United States, USA Softball is the official rule making body of softball.
- Each registered youth team receives ***an electronic*** copy of the Official USA Softball Rule Book and USA Softball publications.
- Become eligible to participate in USA Softball team accident and liability insurance plans at a very competitive rate.
- Opportunity to participate in sanctioned invitational and championship tournaments. Currently, competition is held in 36 youth classifications on a national level.
- Player and team eligibility rules and regulations to ensure uniform application throughout the nation.
- USA Softball provides, upon request, excellent youth coaching clinics, video tapes and other instructional material for associations at a very competitive rate.

## **ACE COACHING CERTIFICATION**

USA Softball is proud to offer the ACE Coaching Certification Program. The ACE Coaching Certification Program is developed and designed to provide softball coaches of all levels from beginning to experienced veterans an opportunity to certify as a coach with a national softball organization.

As the National Governing Body of Softball, it is USA Softball's responsibility to ensure that our coaches achieve a certain level of understanding of what their duties are as a coach of a youth softball team.

The ACE Certification Video and ACE Certification Manual are practical guides to the everyday situations you will encounter as a youth softball coach. After obtaining the ACE certification, you will be well prepared to coach a youth softball team.

Participation in the ACE Coaching Certification Program is mandatory for all teams participating in Championship Play. One coach per team must be certified. Please contact your local Junior Olympic Commissioner for further details.

## **SAFESPORT CERTIFICATION**

***USA Softball is committed to creating and upholding traditions of excellence in softball by building and maintaining a supportive and nurturing environment in which youth may grow, develop, and***

***prosper.*** Simply put – USA Softball will not tolerate ANY abuse whether it is physical, mental, emotional or sexual.

***The U.S. Center for SafeSport seeks to create a healthy, supportive environment for all participants. Through education, resources, and training, the Center helps members of the sport community recognize, reduce, and respond to misconduct in sport.***

***For more information about the Center please visit <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/>***

**Participation in the SafeSport Certification Program is mandatory for all participants over 18, including players.**

## **PREPARING YOUR TEAM FOR JUNIOR OLYMPIC TOURNAMENT PLAY**

Sound defense, smart pitching, timely hitting, aggressive base running, a good draw, and a little luck are all important elements in the formula for winning tournament play. There is one other characteristic that almost without exception is common to all tournament winners; winning teams are mentally prepared both individually and as a team to compete and win at the tournament level.

Some teams that play well in their league never seem to perform as well in tournament play. In league play, teams come to the field, take batting practice, play one game, and then go home. Players know who they are playing, when they are playing, and where they are playing.

Tournament play is entirely different. You play, and then wait. You play again, and then wait again. Sometimes you play back-to-back games; at other times, games are separated by several hours. It is not uncommon to play a game in the morning, again in the afternoon, and then under the lights at night. You don't know who you are playing, or what field you will be on. Games run late, schedules become disrupted, and then sometimes with only a few minutes notice, you find out your next game is ready to start.

Better teams quickly learn that league and tournament play are quite different. An almost entirely different mental approach is required to be successful in tournaments. Good tournament teams have learned to overcome the distractions and focus on each game, one game at a time.

Individually, players have learned to concentrate on their own game and to block out all distractions. This individual concentration carries over to the team level. It becomes contagious and infectious. It spreads throughout the team and everyone becomes dedicated to the collective goals of winning the tournament.

The following list of 14 points can help to mentally prepare a team for a Junior Olympic Tournament. It is a basic list of common sense suggestions that have worked successfully for a variety of winning teams. It could also work for your team.

1. Make sure you have all your equipment. Elementary as it sounds, this is a very important point. A simple thing like a batter without his favorite bat can shatter a player's confidence for an entire weekend. Make sure that you check to see that you have all your bats, balls, 1st baseman's gloves, uniforms, jackets, caps, etc. before you leave for the tournament.
2. If traveling, stay in the same hotel. This allows the team to travel together, and get psyched up together. It also allows the coach to keep track of everyone, especially when leaving for the fields in the morning or when doing a bed check at night.
3. If the tournament is local, get a motel room anyway. The cost split among 15-20 players is only a few dollars apiece. You then have a central meeting place, a place to shower, relax, change and generally add to the fun of the weekend.
4. Encourage family and friends to attend and even travel to the tournament. The more cheerleaders you have, the more pumped-up your team generally is. Spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends are less likely to hassle the ballplayer about spending "another" entire weekend playing softball if they feel welcome to participate and party with the team themselves.
5. Scout out the tournament site ahead of time. If the tournament is local, make sure the team knows as much as possible about the fields to be used: good or bad, fence or no fence, skinned or grass infield, etc. If traveling, try to take the team to the tournament site the day before the tournament begins, usually Friday afternoon or evening. If they at least know what type of fields they will be playing on, that means one less distraction the next day.
6. Gather your team 1-2 hours before your first game. Maybe even have a light breakfast together. Find a local ballfield near the tournament site and take some light batting practice, 25-30 swings each. Don't work too hard, just loosen up.
7. Get everyone to the tournament site 1 hour before your first game is scheduled to start. The last thing your team needs is the distraction of looking for the pitcher, clean-up hitter, or a carload of outfielders minutes before the game is supposed to start.
8. No surprises. Rarely does a team go into a tournament complete. Usually someone can't make it; you pick some up, or both of these. This usually causes a change in batting order or defensive positions for the tournament weekend. Softball players generally have delicate egos and don't like surprises. If they find someone batting in their spot or playing their position, they don't like it. It has a negative effect on their concentration and the last thing a team needs is a player stewing on the bench or complaining to his teammates. If changes are necessary, review them ahead of time with the players involved. Let them know what is happening, why it is happening, and get them to support the change.

9. After your first game is over, gather your team near the centrally posted tournament bracket. Make certain all your players know how to read the bracket. Before anyone leaves, make certain everyone understands the time of the next game, where it is, and, if possible, who you are playing. Everyone should be back at the field one hour before the scheduled starting time. Once again, your team cannot afford the distraction of some players arriving late, or even worse, not arriving at all.
10. Get everyone out of the sun. Warm weather and hot sun can hurt your team, more than injuries to your key players. Needless exposure to the sun can sap a team's strength and weaken their ability to concentrate on their game. If you have minimal time between games, let your players grab a soda and hot dog, and then gather in a shaded area somewhere. If you have several hours between games, go back to the motel, swim in the pool, watch TV, and generally relax.
11. Scout your opponents. Sometimes it is worthwhile for the coach and perhaps a few players to spend some time between games observing those teams you might play over the course of the weekend. Defensive strengths and weaknesses, who hits the ball with power, who has the best arms in the outfield, how they run the bases, and individual player batting tendencies can all provide valuable insights.
12. End of the first day. If you are still playing at the end of the first day, particularly if you are still in the Winner's Bracket, you have cause to celebrate ... but not too much. Sunday is always the toughest day. The teams that are left are the best and, if you get knocked into the Loser's Bracket, it's a tough battle to win in the tournament. Make sure your team knows where and when Sunday's first game is to be played and what pre-game routine will be followed. Usually it is best to follow what you successfully did on Saturday. Make certain that everyone gets a good night's sleep in preparation for the next day. An 11:00 p.m. curfew should satisfy everyone.
13. One team from the Loser's Bracket goes into the finals.... it may as well be your team. Don't make the mistake of assuming that because you lost a game the tournament is over. You are not out of it until you have lost 2 games. If you go into the finals and beat the undefeated team, everything is even up. Better yet, you are on a high coming off a win while they are down, coming off a loss. Every weekend, teams come out of the Loser's Bracket to win tournaments.
14. Get pumped-up. Quiet teams don't win tournaments. Teams that yell, hoot and holler, and get their adrenalines up win tournaments. But they do it the right way. They holler encouragement to each other, they get one another psyched-up and pick each other up when they are down. They don't insult the other team, belittle them, or call them names. That has a tendency to get the opposing teams mad and bring out the best in them. Winning teams know how not to bring out the best in an opponent.

These 14 points, along with sound softball, a good draw, and a little luck are the keys to winning tournaments. None of these points by themselves are earth-shattering news. However, winning teams follow them, at least most of them, every weekend of the softball season. The mental aspect of tournament preparation is every bit as important as physical execution during a game, and these 14



points could be the difference between a trip to the finals or an early trip home.