

SOFTBALL Team Softball

QUALIFYING RULES

1. All first-, second-, and third-place winners at a 2022 NSGA qualifying games will qualify for the 2023 National Senior Games.
2. States that divide men's competition into three skill categories may qualify three men's teams in each skill category. States that divide women's competition into three skill categories may qualify three women's teams in each skill category.

ENTRY REGULATIONS

1. Teams must supply current team rating, tournament history and all other names used or played under during the period of one year. Failure to provide or falsification of information given to the NSGA will result in the team automatically be placed in the highest skill division (Division 1) in the tournament.
2. Teams must provide their own bats, gloves and practice balls.
3. Teams must be all one gender.
4. Team rosters shall be limited to 22 persons, including non-playing coaches, non-playing captains and non-playing bench personnel. No more than 20 of these persons may be players. No players will be added to the roster during the tournament. This includes non-players moving to player status due to an injured team member.
5. Teams are not limited to the number of out-of-state players on their rosters; however, roster changes shall be allowed only as permitted under Rule F. It is the captain's responsibility to declare team residency subject to NSGA approval, at the time of registration. Team roster participants who are unable to compete may be replaced after the official registration deadline for valid medical reasons only. Determining valid change requests are at the discretion of the NSGA and may be made after the advertised registration deadline. The new team member or partner must have participated in the sport they wish to enter, at a qualifying state game.
6. Teams that add two or more players from a higher rated team may be subject to reclassification.
7. All registration and team rules apply to non-playing coaches, non-playing captains and non-playing bench personnel.
8. At the National Senior Games athletes may compete on up to two teams per sport providing that the teams are in different age divisions that are scheduled to play in completely separate sessions.
9. Age divisions for all team competition will be determined by the age of the youngest team player as of December 22, 2023.

FORMAT

1. Tournament format will be pool play or round robin, with as many teams as possible advancing to a double elimination championship bracket. Every effort will be made to provide teams a minimum of 5 games.
2. Awards will be presented for 1st through 4th place within each age/skill division.
3. Men's and women's teams may be divided into a maximum of three skill divisions - Division I (highest level), Division II and Division III (Recreational) based on the number of teams in each division and pool play results. Skill divisions will be utilized as needed as determined by tournament officials. Current national senior softball ratings may be considered. **Note: In an effort to standardize skill categories in all NSGA team sports, the softball skill divisions have been renamed. NSGA skill divisions may not reflect the actual team rating as determined by the National Senior Softball Summit Ratings Committee.**
4. Seeding for double elimination play will be determined based on pool play results in the following order:
 - Won/loss Record (Strength of teams played may be considered)
 - Head-to-Head results – only when all teams play each other
 - Total runs allowed
 - Run differential
 - Total runs scored
 - Coin Toss
5. The NSGA and LOC reserve the right to change the tournament format for any age division based on entry numbers, space restrictions, skill levels or other circumstance.

SPORT RULES

1. This tournament will be conducted in accordance with USA Softball (Senior) Rules, except as modified herein. For a copy of these rules, please visit the USA Softball website www.teamusa.org or call:

USA Softball
2801 NE 50th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73111-7203
(405) 424-5266

2. **Strike Zone Mat:** A Strike Zone Mat will be used in all games to determine balls, strikes, and outs at home plate. The top of the mat will be placed at the top of home plate. The mat will measure twenty-one (21) inches wide and thirty-five (35) inches long with a white home plate centered at the front of the mat measuring seventeen (17) inches across the front, 8 1/2 inches down each side, and 12 inches diagonally to a point nearest the catcher. A legal pitch not swung at that strikes any part of the strike zone mat or home plate shall be called a strike by the umpire.
3. **Pitcher's Plate/Box:** A pitcher's box consisting of the area from the front of the pitcher's plate, 50 feet from home plate, and extending back ten feet (10 ft.) and twenty-four (24) inches wide perpendicular to the pitcher's plate shall be used. The pitcher must release the ball after coming to a complete stop with one foot or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate or within the pitcher's box. One foot must remain in contact with the plate/box when the pitch is released with an underhand motion. A step simultaneous with the release of the ball may be taken in any direction with the free foot. The pitcher must be facing the batter when delivering the pitch. The catcher must remain within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground or home plate, or reaches the catcher's box. This area should be chalked off.
4. **Players and substitutes:** USA Softball rules for re-entry and extra player (EP) will apply. Extra players may play defense at any time provided the total number of defensive players on the field at any time does not exceed the total allowed for that age division.
 - a. Men in age divisions 50+, 55+ and 60+: Ten defensive players shall constitute a team.
 - b. Men in age divisions 65+ 70+ and 75+: Eleven (11) defensive players shall constitute a team
 - c. Women in all age divisions 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+, 70+ and 75+: Eleven (11) defensive players shall constitute a team.
5. **Line-up cards:** Official line-up cards must be presented to the opposing manager and scorekeeper 10 minutes prior to game time. Tournament line-up cards will be furnished to all team managers. Name of player, number and position must be indicated on line-up card.
6. **Batting Line Up:** A Team can bat the allowed number of players or the ability to bat any number of players that are available. This must be declared prior to the beginning of the game and indicated on the line-up card.
7. **Runs per inning:** For all pool play there shall be a five (5) run per inning rule, with unlimited runs allowed in the seventh or final inning. For double elimination play in skill divisions III and II there shall be a five (5) run per inning rule, with unlimited runs allowed in the seventh or final inning. For double elimination play in the Div. I skill division there shall be a seven (7) run per inning rule, with unlimited runs allowed in the seventh or final inning.
8. **Mercy rule:** A mercy rule will be in effect for all games. The rule shall be 20 runs after four innings and 15 runs after five innings, or any time a team may not mathematically score enough runs to stay in the game, ending the game.
9. **Homerun rule:** The homerun rule shall be utilized in pool play (round robin) and double elimination play. All teams except those in the division I will play under the 1-homerun +1-up single rule. Teams in the division I will play under the 3-homerun +1-up single rule. The first ball hit over the fence will count as a home run. Subsequent balls hit over the fence by the same team will count as singles until the opposing team has hit a ball over the fence (homerun). Base runners may only advance one base per single over the fence. This rule shall continue throughout the entire game.
10. **Time Limit:** The length of a game will be seven innings or 60 minutes for pool play (round robin) and double elimination games. After 60 minutes the umpire shall announce that teams will finish the current inning and play one more. The last inning shall be played with unlimited runs. This rule is designed to allow 1 hour and 15 minutes for a game, which is ample time to play 7 innings. Tie games after seven innings or at the end of regulation time will continue until one team is ahead after the completion of any subsequent inning using the International tie-breaker rule. There will be no time limit for championship / medal games.
11. **Base Overrun:** Women age divisions 70+ and 75+ can run through 2nd and 3rd base without the possibility of being tagged out unless an attempt is made or a turn toward the next base is indicated.

12. **Courtesy runner:** An unlimited number of courtesy runners may be used per inning. A player may only be used as a courtesy runner once per inning (except Women 70+ and 75+ which a player can be a courtesy runner as many times as needed per inning). A courtesy runner may not be replaced by another courtesy runner except for injury causing removal of the original courtesy runner permanently from the game. A courtesy runner on base when it is his/her turn at bat will be declared out as the runner. Another courtesy runner may not be used to circumvent this rule.
13. **Team clothing:** Must be of like design and color. An Arabic whole number (0-99) of contrasting color, or outlined in contrasting color, at least 6 inches high must be visible on the back of uniform shirts. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers. Sponsors may be added to jersey but cannot interfere with number placement. Uniforms shall be free of inappropriate symbols or wording.
14. **Legal Pitching Height:** The ball must be delivered with perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6' (feet) from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 12' (feet) from the ground.
15. **Official Softball:** The men's divisions will play 12-inch slow pitch (.44 core and a compression rating of no more than 375 psi). The women's divisions will play 11-inch slow pitch (.47 core and a compression rating of no more than 525 psi).
16. **Bat Rules:** All bats with a *BPF of 1.21 or less will be legal for play. All bats used in play must be stamped with a BPF of 1.21 or less, and must have either a manufacturer installed non-slip grip surface, or a minimum of one wrap of tape. Bats without the BPF stamped on the bat will be considered illegal. A bat is not required to bear an USA Softball certification mark.
Note: this rule is an approved exception to the USA Softball bat policy and will be utilized in state qualifying games and the 2023 National Senior Games. All bats models approved for senior play by ISA, ISSA, SPA and SS-USA will be allowed for tournament play in NSGA.
17. **Field Dimensions:** State qualifying games and the 2023 National Senior Games will utilize a double first base, second home plate, 30-foot commitment line between third base and home plate and a 6 foot pitching box. A field diagram with dimensions is included in the USA Softball rulebook (with the exception of the 6 foot pitching box and strike zone mat). If in the National Chair's and tournament director's discretion, such an adjustment is feasible, base paths will be 70' for men's age divisions 50 to 65+. The base paths will be 65 feet for men 70+ and all women's age divisions.