

# SOFTBALL UMPIRES OF MARYLAND



WWW.MDUMPS.COM



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Thank you for registering for the 2025 season with the Softball Umpires of Maryland, Inc.

You should receive each of the following:

- Flipping Coin courtesy of East Coast Events
- Ejection/Incident Report Card
- List of SUM UICs
- List of Uniform Providers
- ArbiterPay Slides
- Quick Summary of USSSA Rule Differences and 10C Rules
- SUM Three Umpire Essentials and Basic Mechanics
- USSSA Officials Insurance Program FAQ
- 2025 SUM Test and Answer Sheet
- Clinic Agenda

17th Edition (2024-2025) USSSA Fastpitch Rule Book (issued in 2024)

The Umpire's Test is in your packet and posted at mdumps.com. Please take the Test at your leisure.

Maryland Umpires should return their Answer Sheet to UIC John Dye by April 1. There will be an optional test session, Saturday March 8 9:00 am in the Gary Arthur Community Center.

SUM uses Arbiter for all assignments. Please check your calendars and the tournament schedule to determine what dates you need to block. It is incumbent on you to block dates. If you do nothing you show as available.

If you need help with Arbiter, Al Palmer and John Calamari have agreed to be of assistance.

If you need help with ArbiterPay, Scott Snyder has agreed to be of assistance.

There are some other documents you may wish to browse online. The Softball Umpires of Maryland Site is at [www.mdumps.com](http://www.mdumps.com). The following Umpire support documents are posted there.

- SUM Official Umpire Uniform
- 2010 NFHS Mechanics Manual
- SUM Three Umpire Essentials and Basic Mechanics
- SUM Document 3 Part Pregame
- USSSA Region 1 10U "C" & "All-Star" Rule Exceptions
- 2016 SUM Arbiter Guide
- 2023 Casebook
- 2023 Clarifications & Interpretations
- 2024 SUM Working Aid for USSSA Fast Pitch Rule Differences (USSSA, USA Softball, NCAA, NFHS)

Posted on the East Coast Events website, [ussa1.com](http://ussa1.com)

- 2025 Youth Fastpitch Summer Schedule
- Park Information for USSSA Maryland & Delaware sites

## **2025 USSSA Rule Change/ NEW Interpretation**

*Press Release coming soonest.*

A coach may use a one-way electronic communication device to relay signals to any offensive player or defensive player.

## **2025 Softball Umpires of Maryland**

### **Tournament Site UICs**

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David Wilson, 302-270-2166, ump34@comcast.net

### **Umpire Uniform Companies**

#### **USSSA**

For all licensed USSSA Umpire Uniform items please contact [umpgear.usssa.com](http://umpgear.usssa.com)

#### **Richardson**

USSSA Umpire Caps – Preorders Only, [dhauth@verizon.net](mailto:dhauth@verizon.net)

### **General Umpire Equipment**

- [Gerrydavis.com](http://Gerrydavis.com), 800-916-9088
- [Honigs.com](http://Honigs.com)
- [Ump-attire.com](http://Ump-attire.com)

## 2025 USSSA Fast Pitch Rules

This is intended as quick summary of areas of significant differences in USSSA Fast Pitch rules.

Pitching Distance 35 ft (10U); 40 ft (12U); 43 ft (14U and above) USSSA 1.1

Players shall not use other teams on deck circle. USSSA 1.2.J

Metal Cleats prohibited (12U and younger) USSSA 2.4

Bat must have 2014 USSSA 1.20 BPF Thumbprint Mark or 2020 Stamp USSSA 2.10

Base on Balls – No Verbal intentional walk. USSSA 3 Base on Balls

The Mercy Rule is 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, or 8 runs after 5 innings. USSSA 4.4

Team may bat 9, 10, 11 or all players present (Roster Batting). By using No, One, Two or more Additional Player(s). USSSA 5.1.D; 5.3 {9 defensive fielders}

The Designated Player (DP) / FLEX is optional but must be declared before the game starts. USSSA 5.4. No DP/Flex when Roster Batting 5.1.D

Unreported Substitution Penalty: team warning; 2nd offense coach ejected. USSSA 5.5

May be removed as a pitcher and returned as pitcher only once per inning. USSSA 5.5

All Starters & Substitutes may re-enter USSSA 5.6. This includes the DP and FLEX.

A team may use 3 defensive conferences per game; 1 per extra inning; pitcher removed as a pitcher for game. USSSA 4.8.A

The pitcher can step back with non-pivot foot USSSA 6.1.E.2

The pitcher is not required to drag the pivot foot (i.e. Leap is legal) USSSA 6.1.E.3

Batter is out if ENTIRE foot outside box when contacting the pitch. USSSA 7.14.G; Dead Ball

A team may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher.

If available, it must be a player who has not been in game (except as a courtesy runner).

If no such eligible player, the Last Completed At Bat (LCAB) may be used as a courtesy runner.

The player may not be used for both positions in same inning.

If the courtesy runner is injured, another courtesy runner or the pitcher or catcher may run for her. USSSA 8.3.E

Runner off base early is Dead Ball USSSA 8.18.K

After reaching First, may use either white or orange portion of the double first base. 8.17.K.3

A one-way communication device may be used by a coach to all offensive & defensive players.



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## 10&Under C

1. Cannot steal Home 15. (8.1)
2. Can steal more than one base at a time on pitch and/or base on balls (subject to 1. Above)
3. No uncaught third strike rule 15 (8.4.B)
4. 5 runs per inning for first two (2) innings; unlimited after 2<sup>nd</sup> inning.
5. Infield fly rule is in effect 15 (8.17.)

## OFFICIALS INSURANCE (FOR USSSA ACTIVITIES)

### WHEN OFFICIATING A USSSA ACTIVITY, WHAT INSURANCE IS PROVIDED FOR ME?

For USSSA registered officials only that have elected to have insurance coverage the following coverages are provided:

- Secondary accident medical insurance with a \$20,000 limit with a \$500 deductible.
- General liability insurance with a \$2,000,000 per occurrence, \$4,000,000 aggregate limit. Coverage is provided for USSSA registered officials only.

### AM I COVERED WHILE OFFICIATING A PRESEASON OR PRACTICE GAME?

Yes, but only for an activity involving USSSA registered teams and if insurance coverage was selected.

### MOST OF MY OFFICIATING IS FOR USSSA, BUT SOMETIMES I CALL AN UNSANCTIONED TOURNAMENT. DOES MY INSURANCE COVER THESE UNSANCTIONED TOURNAMENTS?

No. USSSA Officials insurance covers USSSA sanctioned activities only. (See next section - Officials Insurance for Non-USSSA activities.)

### I HAVE MY OWN MEDICAL INSURANCE AND AM INJURED WHILE OFFICIATING. DO I HAVE TO FILE THE CLAIM WITH MY INSURANCE CARRIER?

Yes. The officials accident medical coverage is secondary to any other insurance in force.

### I WAS INJURED WHILE OFFICIATING A USSSA EVENT. WHAT PROCEDURE SHOULD I FOLLOW?

First, turn your claim in to your primary insurer, if you have primary insurance. Second, email EPIC Brokers, at [insurance@usssa.com](mailto:insurance@usssa.com) for a claim form. Claim forms will be sent out only to the injured official after verifying registration. Do not hold your claim form! File it immediately and forward all bills to the claims administrator upon receipt.

### IF I AM SUED FOR MY ACTIONS DURING A USSSA ACTIVITY, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you are sued or threatened to be sued in writing, immediately send the information to [insurance@usssa.com](mailto:insurance@usssa.com). Include your full name, address, daytime telephone number, and names and addresses of any witnesses.

### AM I COVERED IF INJURED IN AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT GOING TO OR FROM AN OFFICIATING ASSIGNMENT?

No. Travel coverage is not included.

### ARE MY EYEGLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES COVERED?

No. Personal property is not covered.

### IS CHIROPRACTIC CARE COVERED FOR OFFICIAL INJURIES?

Yes. Subject to the policy limits.

### I WAS INJURED WHILE OFFICIATING A USSSA GAME. I WANT TO WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE SEASON FOR TREATMENT. IS THIS COVERED?

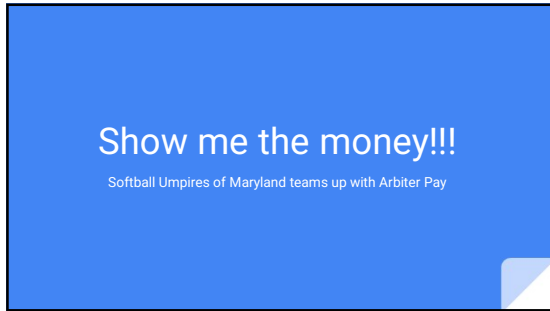
No. Treatment must begin within 30 days of the date of the injury, and be concluded within 52 weeks of the injury date.

### I SUFFERED A HEAT STROKE WHILE OFFICIATING A USSSA TOURNAMENT. DOES OUR OFFICIALS MEDICAL INSURANCE COVER THIS?

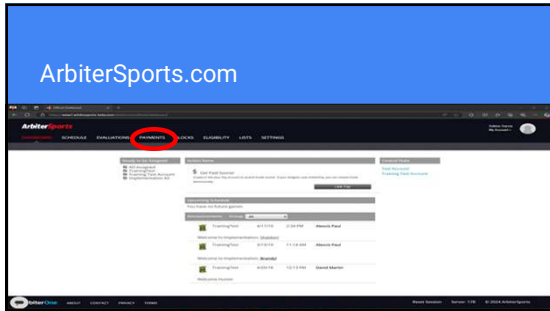
No. Heat stroke, heart attack, dehydration, etc. are illnesses. The officials policy covers accident medical injuries only, not illness or disease.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE USSSA INSURANCE PROGRAM?

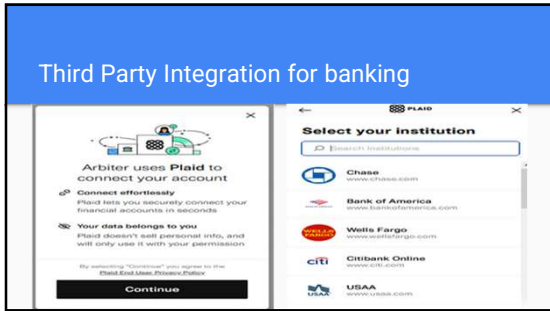
Email us at: [USSSA@epicbrokers.com](mailto:USSSA@epicbrokers.com)



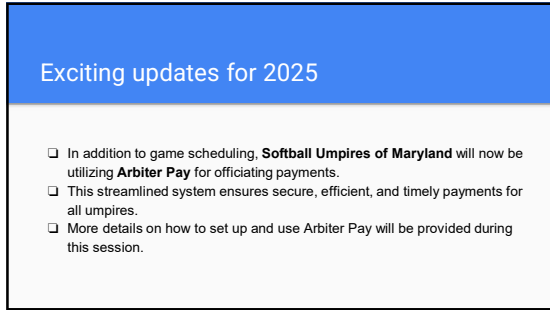
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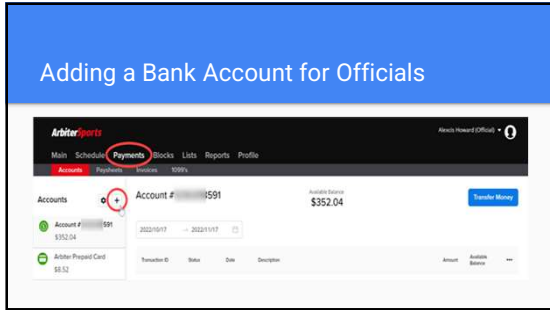
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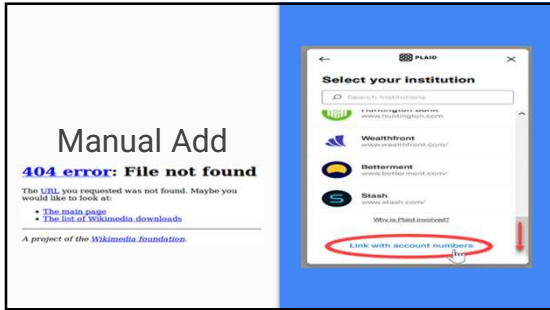
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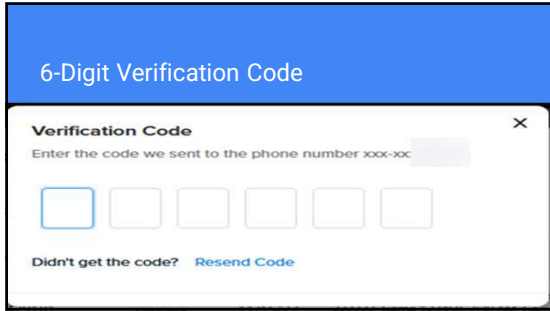
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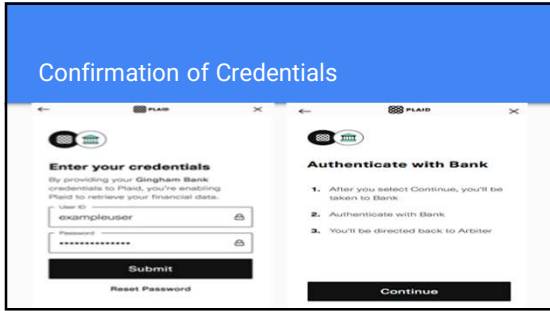
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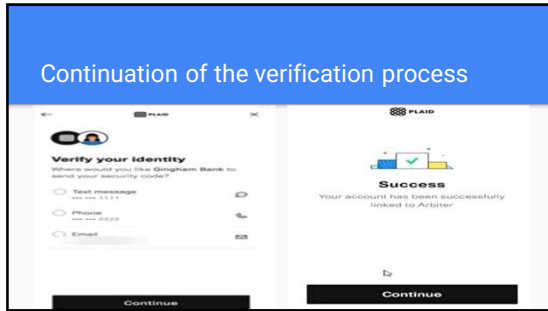


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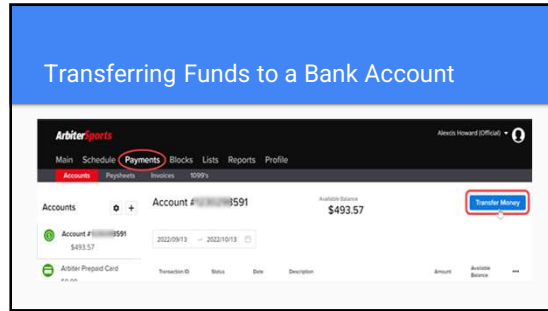


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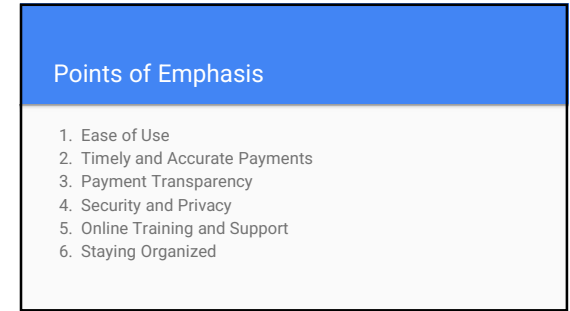




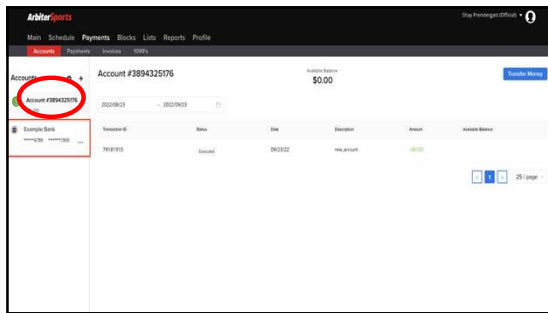
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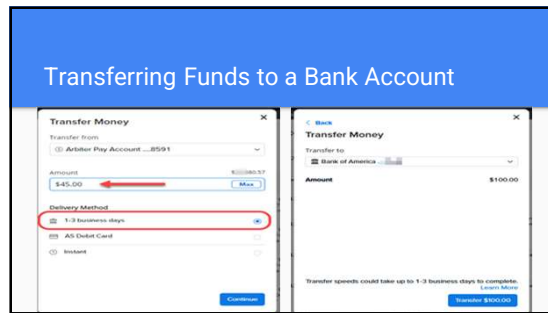
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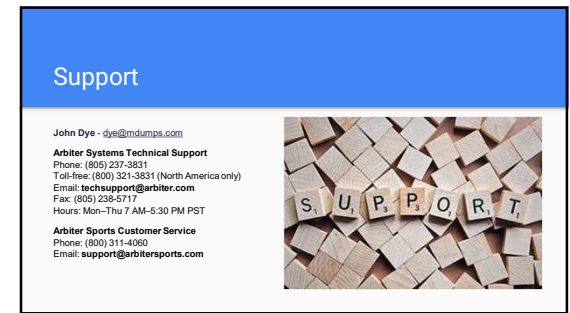
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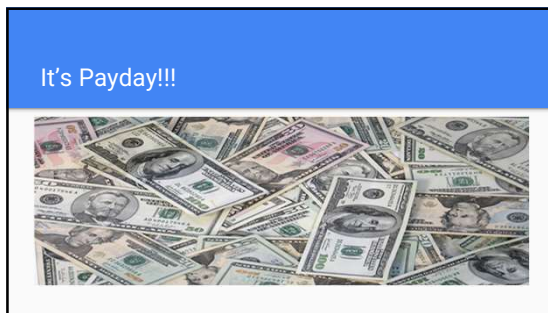
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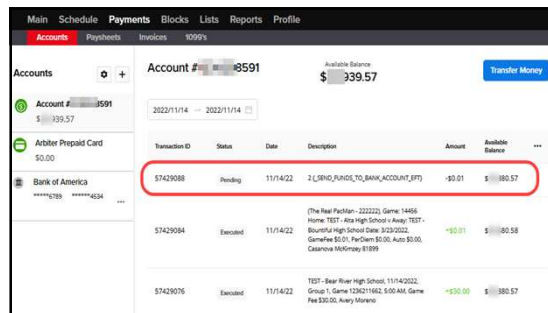
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# THREE UMPIRE MECHANICS

## A Quick Study of the Basics

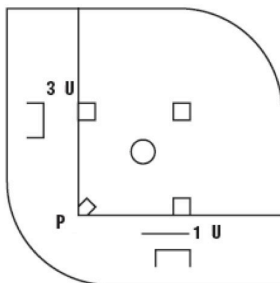
### Starting Positions

There are only three different positions you will ever be in at the start of the pitch

1. Standard position
2. Rotated position
3. Counter-rotated position

#### 1. Standard Starting Position

**A.** Use when there are no runners on

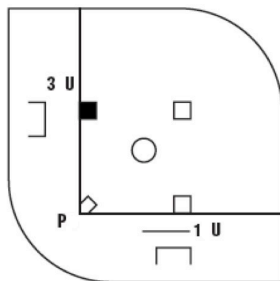


**P:** behind the plate.

**1U & 3U:** 18-20 feet down and close to the line, completely in foul territory in an upright, standing position.

As the pitch is delivered, 1U and 3U take no more than two steps forward, ending in a ready-set position or on the proper push foot (the outside foot).

**B.** Use when there is a runner on third base only



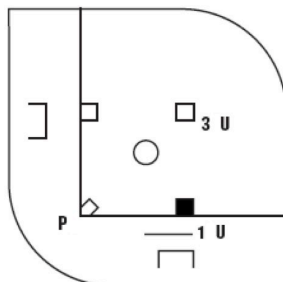
**P:** behind the plate.

**1U:** 18-20 feet down and close to the line completely in foul territory in an upright standing position OR in a set position. If standing, as the pitch is delivered, take no more than two steps forward, ending in a ready-set position or on the proper push foot (the outside foot).

**3U:** in a set position 8-10 feet down the line, completely in foul territory. 3U is facing the plate and may be a step or so perpendicularly off the line.

#### 2. Rotated Starting Position

**A.** Use when there is a runner on first base only



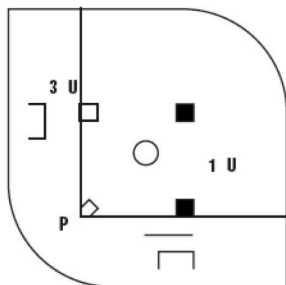
**P:** behind the plate.

**1U:** in a set position 8-10 feet down and on the line, completely in foul territory, facing the plate.

**3U:** facing the plate in a set position 10-12 feet beyond second base on an imaginary line extending straight out towards right-center field from second base

### 3. Counter-rotated Starting Position

- A.** Use in every situation other than no one on, runner on first only or runner on third only as in 1 and 2 above



Counter-rotated

**PU:** behind the plate

**1U:** in a set position somewhere in the 30 feet between 15 feet from first base and 15 feet from second base, usually behind the second baseman, and optimally, no more than 15 feet from the baseline and facing the plate.

**3U:** facing the plate in a set position 8-12 feet (depending on where the runners are) down and on the line from third base. With a runner on third, 3U may be a few steps perpendicularly off the line but still facing the plate.

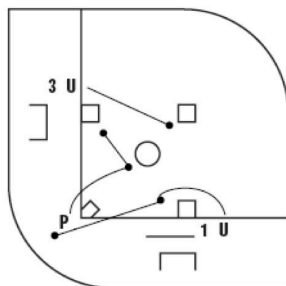
### How and When Umpires Rotate

Umpires always rotate in a clockwise motion

1. Full Rotation
2. Partial Rotation

#### 1. Full Rotation

- A.** Use when in the Standard Starting Position with no one on



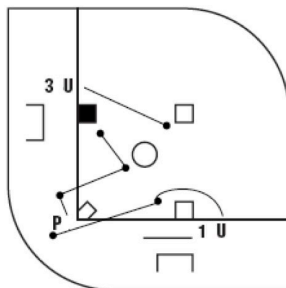
**P:** move out to in front of the pitching circle and as the runner approaches second base, move to a primary position 8-10 feet from third base.

**1U:** pivot inside the diamond 10 feet beyond the baseline and about 10 feet away from the foul line. See the batter-runner touch first base. When the runner advances beyond second base, move to a point-of-the-plate holding position at home. Adjust to the play.

**3U:** move straight into the diamond to a primary position 8-10 feet from second base. When 1U rotates to the plate, 3U is responsible for all plays at first or second.

- B.** Use when in the Standard Starting Position with a runner on third only

**AND THAT RUNNER WILL SCORE WITH NO PLAY ON HER/HIM** - if there is ANY chance of a play at 3rd, 3U must stay there and 1U must take BR to 2nd.



**P:** see R3 touch home, then move out to in front of the pitching circle and as the BR approaches second base, move to a primary position 8-10 feet from third base.

**1U:** pivot inside the diamond 10 feet beyond the baseline and about 10 feet away from the foul line. See BR touch first. When the BR advances beyond second base, move to a point-of-the-plate holding position at home. Adjust to play.

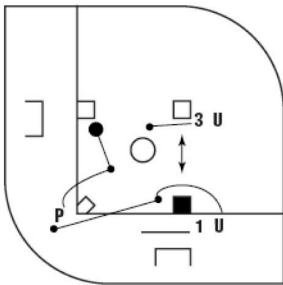
**3U:** move straight into the diamond to a primary position 8-10 feet from second base. When 1U rotates to the plate, 3U is responsible for all plays at first or second.



## 2. Partial Rotation - Only the P and 1U Rotate

### A. Use when in the Rotated Starting Position

**No umpire is ever part of a rotation if his/her starting position is off the line**



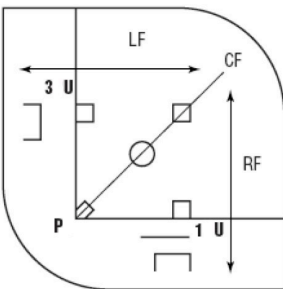
**PU:** move out towards the pitching circle and as the R1 approaches second base, move to a primary position 8-10 feet from third base.

**1U:** pivot inside the diamond 10 feet beyond the baseline and about 10 feet away from the foul line. See BR touch first. When R1 advances beyond second base, move to a point-of-the-plate holding position at home. Adjust to play.

**3U:** pivot inside the diamond to a primary position 8-10 feet from second base and see R1 touch second. When 1U rotates to the plate, 3U is responsible for all plays at first and second.

## Fly Ball Coverage - Chasing

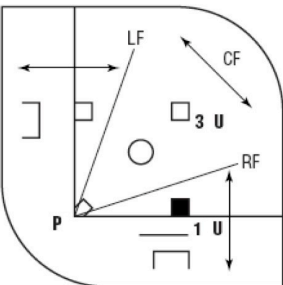
### 1. From the Standard Starting Position



Chase when:

- Ball is close to fence
- More than one fielder is going for the ball
- It looks like trouble:
  - Short hop
  - Back pedaling
  - Diving

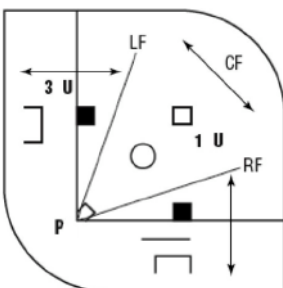
### 2. From the Rotated Starting Position



Chase parallel to the flight (path) of the ball **UNLESS** you will need to judge fair/foul. If you will need to judge fair/foul, chase down the line.

Always be stopped to see the catch/no catch and to render your judgment.

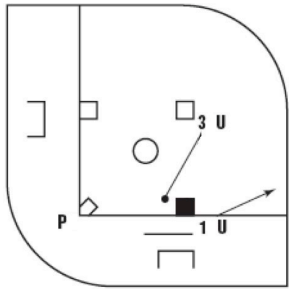
### 3. From the Counter-rotated Starting Position



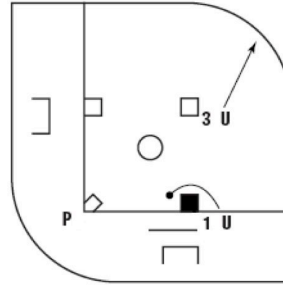
When an umpire chases, we are working with two umpires. Usually, but not always, we revert to the two umpire system.

For instance, when 1U chases with no one on, P covers 1st and 3U rotates into 2nd. When the BR advances to 2nd, P goes back to the plate and 3U takes the runner to 3rd if needed.

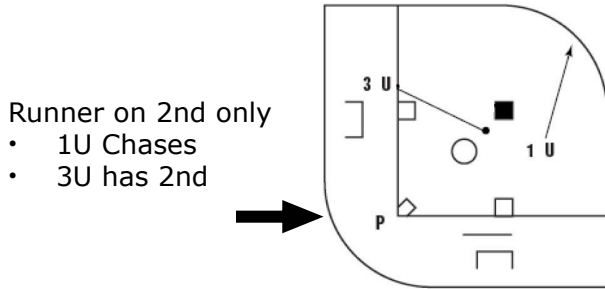
# Tag Up Responsibilities When One Umpire Chases



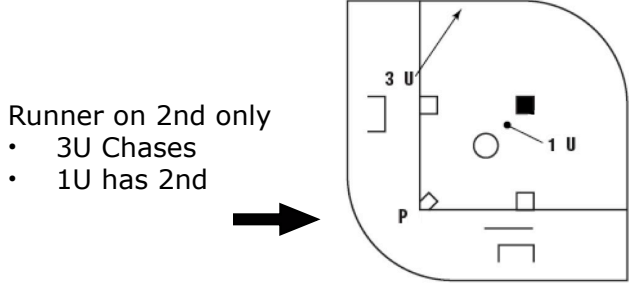
Runner on 1st only  
 • 1U Chases  
 • 3U has 1st



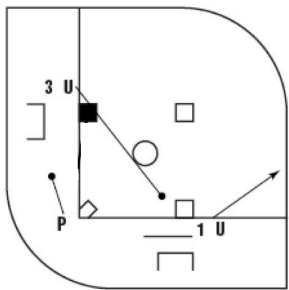
Runner on 1st only  
 • 3U Chases  
 • 1U has 1st



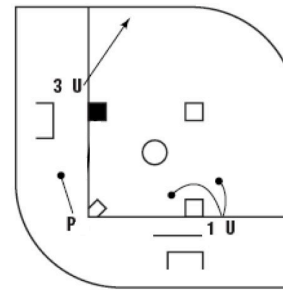
Runner on 2nd only  
 • 1U Chases  
 • 3U has 2nd



Runner on 2nd only  
 • 3U Chases  
 • 1U has 2nd



Runner on 3rd only  
 • 1U Chases  
 • P has 3rd  
 • 3U has 1st & 2nd



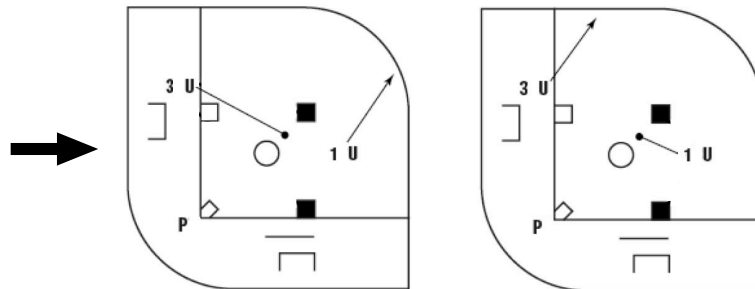
Runner on 3rd only  
 • 3U Chases  
 • P has 3rd  
 • 1U has 1st & 2nd

## Option A

Runners on 1st & 2nd

### Option A:

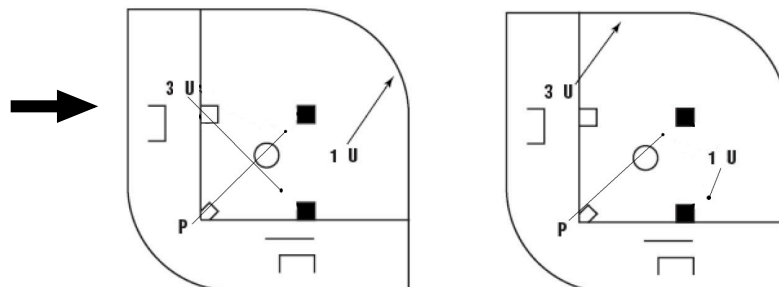
- 1U chases
- 3U has 1st & 2nd
- OR**
- 3U chases
- 1U has 1st & 2nd



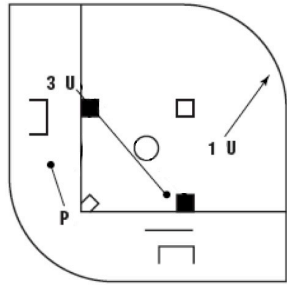
## Option B

### Option B:

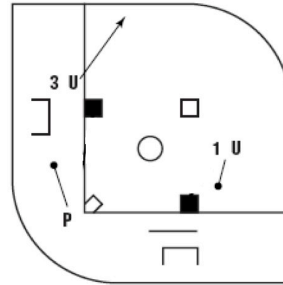
- 1U chases
- P has tag-up at 2nd
- 3U has tag-up at 1st
- OR**
- 3U chases
- P has tag-up at 2nd
- 1U has tag-up at 1st



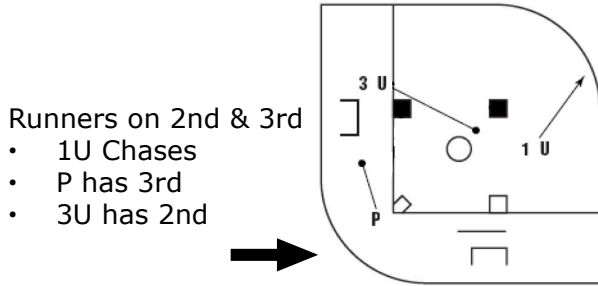
## Tag Up Responsibilities When One Umpire Chases (continued)



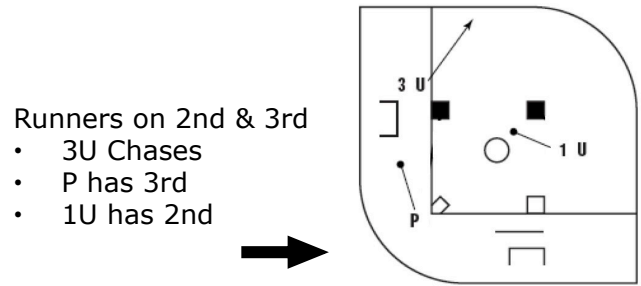
- Runners on 1st & 3rd
- 1U Chases
  - P has 3rd
  - 3U has 1st



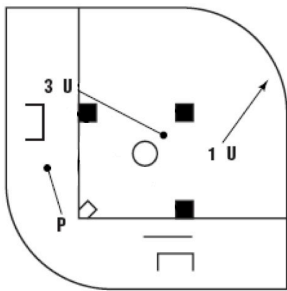
- Runners on 1st & 3rd
- 3U Chases
  - P has 3rd
  - 1U has 1st



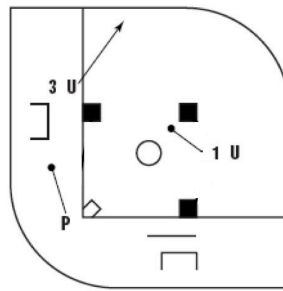
- Runners on 2nd & 3rd
- 1U Chases
  - P has 3rd
  - 3U has 2nd



- Runners on 2nd & 3rd
- 3U Chases
  - P has 3rd
  - 1U has 2nd



- Bases Loaded
- 1U Chases
  - P has 3rd
  - 3U has 1st & 2nd



- Bases Loaded
- 3U Chases
  - P has 3rd
  - 1U has 1st & 2nd

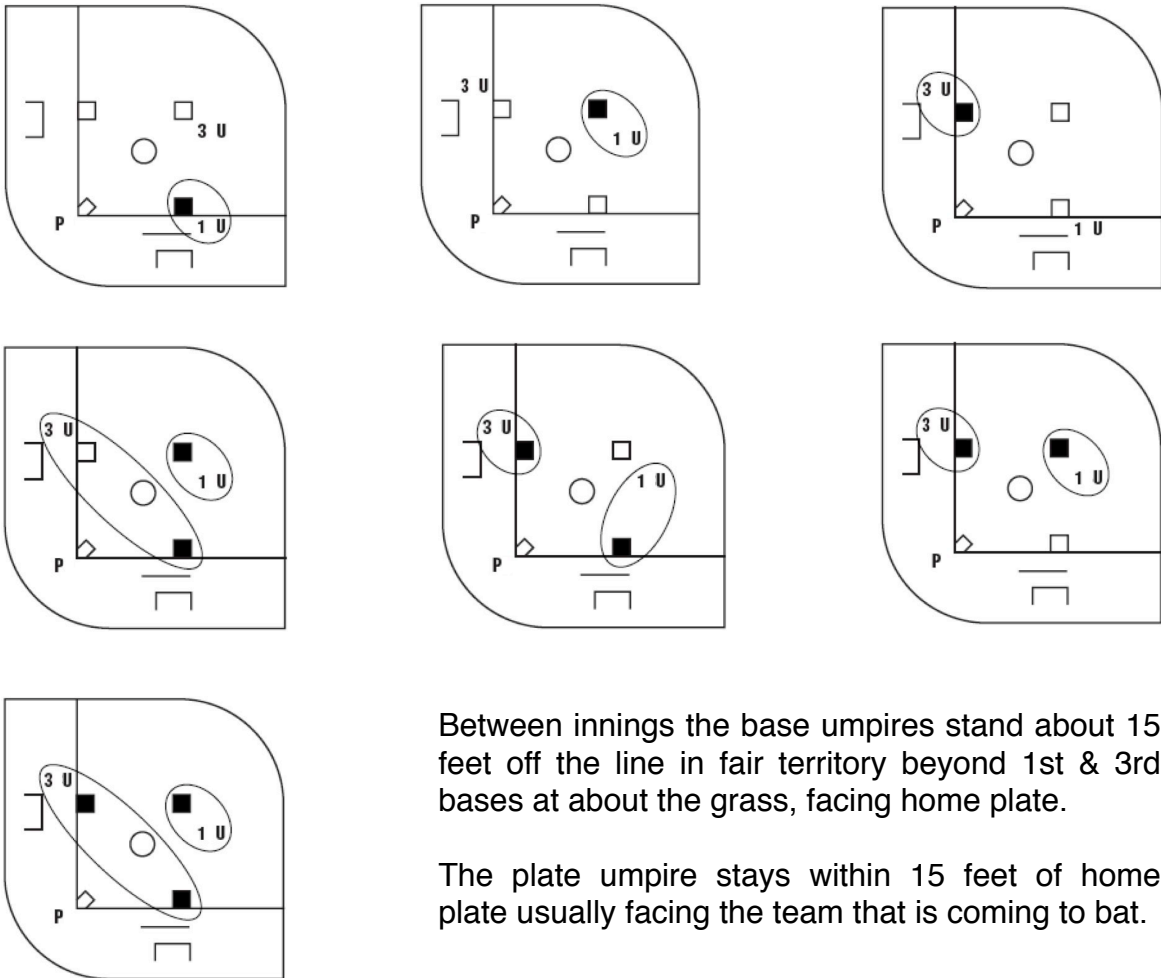
**NOTE:** 3U NEVER has a tag-up at 3rd if 1U chases

## Tag Up Responsibilities When NO Umpire Chases

Runner Situation		Who's Got the Tag?
Runner on First	➡	1U has the tag-up at first
Runner on Second	➡	1U has the tag-up at second
Runner on Third	➡	3U has the tag-up at third
Runners on First and Second	Option A ➡	1U has both tag-ups
Runners on First and Second	Option B ➡	1U has tag-up at first 3U has tag-up at second
Runners on First and Third	➡	1U has tag-up at first 3U has tag-up at third
Runners on Second and Third	➡	1U has tag-up at second 3U has tag-up at third
Bases Loaded	➡	1U has tag-ups at first & second 3U has tag-up at third

**NOTE:** Plate Umpire has no tag-up responsibilities if no umpire chases

## Umpire Responsibilities for Runners Leaving Before the Pitch is Released



Between innings the base umpires stand about 15 feet off the line in fair territory beyond 1st & 3rd bases at about the grass, facing home plate.

The plate umpire stays within 15 feet of home plate usually facing the team that is coming to bat.

The three umpire system is a wonderful system to work. It provides many luxuries and advantages over the two umpire system. There are times, especially at third base, where the umpire may need to take only one or two steps to get the best position.

Learn each position. Use disciplined and controlled movements. Know why you move and make all your moves efficient.

The umpire closest to the interference or obstruction is responsible for calling it.

Before EVERY pitch, remind yourself of and prepare yourself for, what you will do on the next batted ball or the next play. Ask yourself in advance:

- What is my area of fly ball coverage?
- Where do I go if my partner chases?
- Where do I go on a hit to the infield?
- Where do I go on a hit to the outfield?
- Where do I go on a pick-off or steal?

## References

- Rulebook 2024 USSSA OFFICIAL FASTPITCH PLAYING RULES and BY-LAWS 17th Edition  
[https://ussa.com/docs/Fastpitch/Fastpitch\\_Rules.pdf](https://ussa.com/docs/Fastpitch/Fastpitch_Rules.pdf)
- Mechanics NFHS Softball Umpires Manual – and USSSA Exceptions \*\*  
 THREE UMPIRE MECHANICS A Quick Study of the Basics \*\*
- 10C USSSA Region 1 10U “C” & “All-Star” Rule Exceptions \*\*

\*\* online at [https://mdumps.com/support\\_documents.html](https://mdumps.com/support_documents.html)

## TRUE OR FALSE

- 1 Once a game has started, it is discovered that the pitching distance is incorrect, the correction shall be made immediately and the game shall start over.
- 2 The on deck batter may use either on deck circle
- 3 Any non-wooden bat not displaying the USSSA 2014 or the 2020 Fastpitch Only 1.20 BPF mark on the taper, will be ruled a Non-Approved illegal bat
- 4 Tinted eye shields are permissible on catcher's masks and defensive face shields.
- 5 A glove worn by a player that is entirely white, gray or optic in color is illegal
- 6 A team may walk a batter by notifying the umpire.
- 7 It is a catch if a fielder holds the ball long enough but then drops it when she collides with another player, the fence or the ground
- 8 Offensive Interference is an act, physical or verbal, by a member of the offensive team that illegally impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder
- 9 Batter bunts, the ball hits the ground, bounces and hits the batter who is completely in fair territory within the front part of the batter’s box. It is Foul ball.
- 10 A 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.
- 11 A team may bat all roster players in pool play only
- 12 If an absent player was injured while a batter-runner or runner, the absent player may be replaced by the LCAB, to fulfill her baserunning responsibility.
- 13 An absent player may not return to the lineup unless that player left the game under the Blood Rule.
- 14 The DP may play defense for a player other than the FLEX player.
- 15 The FLEX may not play offense only.
- 16 The FLEX player may re-enter the game as many times as she wants provided they return to the non-batting position or to the DP's position in the lineup.
- 17 The starting pitcher must face one complete batter.
- 18 A substitute who is replaced may not reenter the game.
- 19 Prior to the pitch, the pitcher's pivot foot must be partially on top of the pitcher's plate.
- 20 The pitcher's non-pivot foot must be partially on top of the pitcher's plate prior to the pitch.
- 21 Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must come to the pitcher's plate with her hands apart and present the ball.
- 22 The pitcher takes a signal from her coach, steps on the pitcher's plate, then looks at her catcher. An illegal pitch should be called.

- 23 The pitch begins and cannot be discontinued when the pitcher's hands are separated once they have been placed together.
- 24 Any step back by the pitcher with the non-pivot foot must begin before the hands come together.
- 25 The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate or push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate.
- 26 Once having lost contact with the pitcher's plate, the pivot foot may not bear weight again until the pitch is released.
- 27 The pitcher may not slide the pivot foot across the rubber after establishing the contact point with the rubber.
- 28 If the pitcher uses dirt to dry the hand, she is required to wipe the hand prior to contacting the ball.
- 29 The pitcher's fingers, hand, wrist, forearm, or elbow may be taped for injury providing the tape is a neutral color.
- 30 Once the ball has been returned to the pitcher to prepare for the next pitch, she has 20 seconds to release the pitch
- 31 Amy, the pitcher, moves to left field when a relief pitcher comes in. The next inning, Amy returns to pitch with one out and the bases loaded. Since Amy has already pitched, no warm up pitches are allowed.
- 32 The umpire shall declare no pitch if the catcher has one foot out of the catcher's box
- 33 With R1 on first base, The pitcher commits an illegal pitch resulting in a called strike. The proper penalty is for R1 to be advanced to second and the pitch is declared a ball.
- 34 The coach of the offensive team has the option of accepting the effect of an illegal pitch or taking the result of the play.
- 35 No pitch is called if a pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball when the batter is not in position.
- 36 It is an illegal pitch if the pitcher picks up a handful of dirt with her pitching hand, and then without wiping the hand proceeds to throw a pitch.
- 37 If a batter interferes with the catcher's attempt to make a play on a runner stealing a base, the ball is dead and the batter is out.
- 38 A team playing with an absent player is not required to take an out when the player is due to bat, as long as the opposing coach agrees.
- 39 A batter who enters the box with a non-approved bat shall be called out and ejected along with the head coach
- 40 A slap hitting batter, hits the ball with her front foot partially outside the front line of the batter's box. The ball is dead and the batter called out.
- 41 The pitcher is considered to be in the 16-foot circle when both feet are within or partially within the lines.
- 42 The "look back rule" is in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base or has been declared out, and the pitcher has possession of the ball within the 16-foot circle.
- 43 The same courtesy runner may not run for both the pitcher and the catcher any time during the game
- 44 The LCAB courtesy runner is determined at the time the pitcher or catcher becomes a runner.
- 45 If an ineligible or incorrect courtesy runner (CR) is utilized and is discovered after the ball is made live while still on base, the CR is called out and restricted to the bench.
- 46 The courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher was injured while running the bases. The offensive team has the option of using another courtesy runner or the pitcher or catcher may run until they score or are put out.
- 47 The team has moved the Flex player into the DP batting position. The Flex is the pitcher. The Designated Player (DP) reenters and bats for the FLEX and is walked. A courtesy runner is permitted for DP.



- 48 The pitcher has a courtesy runner in the top of the first and does not face the first batter in the bottom of the first. She is restricted to the bench.
- 49 An unreported courtesy runner is treated the same as an illegal substitute.
- 50 The catcher obstructs the lead off batter while hitting a fair ball for a single, and the batter is safe at first base. The coach or captain of the team obstructed has the option of the play or penalty.
- 51 A runner is off first base with the pitch; sees the shortstop catch a line drive and turns around heading back to first. The shortstop overthrows first base into dead ball territory. The runner is awarded second base (the base she is going to plus one).
- 52 A Runner is out when the runner Interferes with a fielder attempting to field a fly ball over foul territory.
- 53 The runner is not in contact with the base (leaves early) at the time a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. It is a delayed dead-ball and the coach has the option of the play or penalty.
- 54 The runner is hit with a fair batted ball after it touched or has passed an infielder, except the pitcher, and the Umpire judges that no other infielder had an opportunity to make a play, the runner is not out and the ball remains alive.
- 55 A runner is out when contacted by a fair-batted ball after it passes any infielder, except the pitcher, and the Umpire judges that an outfielder has a play.
- 56 With no runners on base, the batter hits a ground ball to the shortstop who overthrows the first baseman. The First base coach catches the thrown ball. The runner is out.
- 57 When no play is being attempted at first base, the batter-runner (BR) may touch the white or colored base. After the BR becomes a runner, she and any fielder may use the white or colored base.
- 58 A runner missing a base can be a Live or Dead ball appeal.
- 59 When an improper batter becomes a runner and the defense appeals before the next pitch the improper batter is out.
- 60 A fair ball that touches an Umpire before touching any fielder and before passing any fielder other than the pitcher is a Delayed Dead ball
- 61 The ball becomes dead immediately when the batter-runner moves back toward home plate to delay being tagged out.
- 62 During the game a player carelessly throws her bat. Penalty for First Offense is team warning, Second Offense is both the player and coach are restricted to the dugout for the remainder of the game.
- 63 A one-way communication device may be used by a coach to relay signals to the offensive.
- 64 On defense, a coach may use a one-way communication device only to the catcher.
- 65 A player that gets ejected for initiating malicious contact is always declared out.
- 66 In accordance with World Series Bylaws (and also in our local play) In pool play games where home team is determined by a coin toss prior to the start of a game , the winner of the coin toss has choice of home or visitors.
- 67 (10C) The uncaught third strike rule does not apply.
- 68 (10C) The infield fly rule is not in effect.
- 69 (10C) - Runners starting at third base may not steal home, but are liable to be put out if they are off the base
- 70 (10C) A 5 run limit per inning shall be imposed for the first 2 innings of the game.
- 71 (10C) R3 is the runner on third base. In an attempted pickoff, the catcher throws the ball out of play. R3 is awarded home.
- 72 No one on, base hit to left field; Base Umpire may rim by staying outside.

- 73 With no runners on base and a play at first base, the Plate Umpire should leave the plate area on the left side and follow the batter-runner toward first base in fair ground. Go 15 to 20 feet toward first base and come to a stop slightly inside the foul line to observe the play at first.
- 74 The plate umpire has tag responsibilities for the runner at second base with runners at first and second base
- 75 With R2 on second base, B4 hits a ground ball to the shortstop who throws to 3rd. The Base Umpire has the initial play at Third Base.
- 76 With R2 on second base, B4 hits a ground ball to the shortstop who throws to first. The Base Umpire has the play at first and subsequent play at Third Base.
- 77 With R2 on second base, B4 hits an uncaught line drive to the left fielder who throws to 3rd. The Base Umpire has the initial play at Third Base.
- 78 Long sleeve shirts may not be worn under the pullover shirt.
- 79 Umpire Jurisdiction begins upon the arrival of both Umpires within the confines of the field
- 80 Umpire Jurisdiction ends with the last out of the game.
- 81 The Umpire making the decision may ask another Umpire for information before making a final decision.
- 82 At the Pre-Game conference, The Plate Umpire must have each coach to verbally verify that their team is legally and properly equipped
- 83 The pre-game conference should begin as the home team takes the field
- 84 Any situation not specified in the rules should be referred to the UIC or Tournament Director
- 85 The Plate Umpire should keep a record of all courtesy runners
- 86 Both Umpires can call an illegal pitch. The Plate Umpire has primary coverage for the pitcher's hands and outside the width of the pitchers plate. The Base Umpire has primary coverage for the pitcher's feet.
- 87 The Plate Umpire never has responsibility to call a tag play at second base.
- 88 3 Umpire - No one on; base hit to left field; U1 follows B/R to 2nd
- 89 3 Umpire - Runner on first; base hit to left field; U1 rotates home.
- 90 3 Umpire - Runner on second; base hit to left field; U1 rotates home.



**Softball Umpires of Maryland Fast Pitch State Clinic Agenda – March 1, 2025  
– Gary Arthur Community Center, Cooksville, MD**

**John Dye, Maryland State UIC**

**Bob Hamburg, Maryland State Scheduler**

**John Wright, Senior USSSA Fastpitch Regional Umpire in Chief**

**Andy Wisk, State Director, National FP Committee Chair**

- 8:30 Registration / Uniform Sales
- 9:00 Welcome  
Administration
- 9:15 State of SUM  
2024 Numbers
- 9:25 Introductions
- 9:30 2025 Changes
- 9:40 Scheduler's Report
- 9:45 ArbiterPay
- 9:55 Umpire Advisory Team
- 10:00 Training Report
- 10:05 USSSA Umpiring Opportunities
- 10:15 National USSSA Umpire Report
- 10:25 BREAK
- 10:40 Mechanics
- 10:55 Rules Emphasis
- 11:30 USSSA State Director
- 11:40 Umpire Awards
- 11:50 2025 Schedule
- 12:00 50-50  
Closing

# USSSA FASTPITCH ANNOUNCES CHANGES

TO ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION  
PROTOCOL OUTLINED IN RULEBOOK



At its 56th annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, USSSA announced a major rule change for the 2025 season. It is included in the 17th online revised edition of the Fastpitch Rule Book, effective January 1, 2025.

Teams will now be allowed to use one-way electronic communication devices to communicate from the dugout (when on defense) and from the dugout or coach's box (when on offense). The decision to use such devices is optional and may include a single player, several players, or all on-field players, provided the communication is one-way from the dugout to the field.

“This is a win-win for all participants in the game, especially coaches,” according to Andy Wisk, chairman of the USSSA National Fastpitch Committee. “We are leveraging technology to enable our coaches to do what they’ve always done, but in a new and more efficient way.”

National Director of Fastpitch Ryan Highfill agrees. “Pace of play has continued to be a problem, not just for USSSA, but for the diamond sports in general at all levels. This rule change addresses that issue by modernizing the game while maintaining the way it is traditionally played.”

While the rule DOES permit a new form of communication, it does not set aside traditional rules governing the game. Rules 6.1.K (the 20-second rule for pitchers) and Rule 7.8 (the 10-second rule for batters), remain in effect, as well as the rules governing charged conferences and the requirement that an ejected coach have no further communication with his/her team.

“Our rule is easily enforceable for the umpires. It is user-friendly, and maintains the balance between offense and defense,” said Don Briscoe, Senior National UIC for USSSA Fastpitch. “Anything that speeds up the game — while preserving its basic character — is a good thing, especially for the players we serve.”

The online revised version of the 17th Edition USSSA Fastpitch playing rules may be found online at [ussa.com](http://ussa.com)

## Changes in the Seventeenth Edition

### 2025 RULES CHANGES

RULE 2 EQUIPMENT, Sec 13, page 17 (new) Authorizes use of one-way communication devices for defensive and offensive players

RULE 11 SPORTING BEHAVIOR, Sec 2.G page 62 Revises limits on electronic communication to accommodate new Rule 2.13

RULE 11 SPORTING BEHAVIOR, Sec 2, PENALTY A-K page 62 Delineates the penalty for violation of new Rule 2.13

#### Rule 2 Sec 13. ONE-WAY COMMUNICATION DEVICES

A coach may utilize exclusively one-way electronic communication devices from the dugout/bench area only (when on defense) and from the dugout/ bench area or the coach's box (when on offense) for the purpose of relaying signals to his/her players. The device/system must be worn as designed by the manufacturer and must be commercially available to the public for purchase (customized systems and devices are prohibited). No two-way communication devices, such as cell phones, pagers, walkie talkies, etc are allowed to be worn or carried onto the playing field. The choice to supply and utilize the one-way communication devices shall be an individual team decision and any team utilizing them shall be legally permitted to do so.

PENALTY: FIRST OFFENSE is a team warning and removal of the illegal devices. SECOND OFFENSE and any subsequent violation the current head coach is ejected pursuant to Rule 12.1, and the right to use equipment authorized under this rule is terminated for the game

RULE 11. SPORTING BEHAVIOR Sec 2. A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:

G. Use electronic communication, television monitoring or replay equipment during the course of the game, **except as specifically authorized by 2.13 (one-way communication devices)**. Electronic scorebooks may be used to record the current game.

I. Be in possession of any object in the coach's box other than scorekeeping materials/devices, which shall be used for scorekeeping purposes only, **and/or one-way communication devices authorized by 2.13.**

PENALTY A-K: FIRST OFFENSE is a team warning. SECOND OFFENSE and any subsequent violation the offender is restricted to the bench for the remainder of the game and their current head coach shall be ejected. In K, if the illegal bat is altered or non-approved, the player and head coach are immediately ejected. **In G, for a first offense, a team warning is issued and the illegal equipment is removed; for a subsequent violation, the current head coach is ejected and the offending team's right to use one-way communication devices is terminated for the remainder of the game.**