SSUSA 2023 rules summary

PITCHING

• All pitchers must wear a face mask.
• Pitch must be delivered with arc of 6 feet to 12 feet above the ground.
• Pitcher's box is 2 feet wide by 10 feet deep. Pitcher must have some portion of one foot inside box when beginning delivery. Any part of foot touching the chalk line is considered "in" the box.
• No "walking the box." Pitcher must come set and pause facing batter with ball in front of body. Pitcher may take one step while keeping pivot foot in contact with pitcher's box.
• Illegal pitches are signaled (left arm extended from side with hand forming fist) and verbalized (say "illegal") in flight when ball reaches top of arc.

BATTING

• Batter's box is 3 feet wide by 7 feet deep. Batter must have at least part of each foot inside batter's box before the pitcher begins delivery. Any portion of the foot touching the chalk line is considered "in" the box.
• On the swing, the batter is considered out of the box when he has one foot on the ground completely outside the box when contact is made (fair or foul ball). This is a dead ball out.

BALL/STRIKE COUNT

• Batter starts with 1-1 count. He is allowed one foul ball (a courtesy or waste foul) *once he has two strikes. (Tuesday 55 0-0 none to waste)*
• Courtesy foul hit backward still must go over the batter's head to be caught for an out, just like other foul tips.

DOUBLE FIRST BASE

• Batter-runner must use the safety base if there is a play being made at the base unless avoiding a collision with defender (a runner touching both bases simultaneously is not out). To avoid collision, the batter-runner can use either bag. Defender **must** touch white bag to record an out on initial play **unless making the play from foul ground.**
• Calls involving the double base/ safety base are live calls by the umpire (not appeal plays).
• After the initial play, the double base/safety base become one base.

BASE RUNNING

• A runner must make every effort to avoid collisions. If in umpire's judgment the runner misses base to avoid a collision, he may be called safe. If in umpire's judgment he fails to avoid a collision, he may be declared out.
• A base runner may tag and advance on any fly ball caught in the field of play, fair or foul. The ball remains live.

COURTESY RUNNERS

• Any player listed on the lineup card may be used as a courtesy runner.
• A courtesy runner is in game when he steps on base. He must notify the umpire he is entering, and be acknowledged by umpire, before pitcher is ready to deliver first pitch.
• A courtesy runner may enter only between at-bats (not during an at-bat). Umpire shall prohibit request for courtesy runner to enter during at-bat.
• Once in the game, the courtesy runner cannot be replaced for another runner unless injured seriously enough to leave game. A runner lifted for a courtesy runner may not return to a base that inning.
• A courtesy runner may be used for a base runner at any base, but the same player can act as a courtesy runner only once per inning. If he runs again, an out is declared after he touches a base the second time as a courtesy runner. *(Tues 55 max 2x per game)*
• An illegal courtesy runner is committing a continuing violation and can be called out any time on base or after scoring and before first pitch to next batter.
• Should a courtesy runner be on base when his turn at bat arrives, the courtesy runner is declared out on the base then takes his turn at bat.

COMMITMENT LINE

• Placed 30 feet up the third base line from the front edge of home plate.
• Once a runner touches or crosses the commitment line, he cannot retreat toward third base for any reason.
• A retreating runner is declared out the moment he re-crosses the line.
• Runners tagged after **BOTH feet** have touched/crossed the commitment line are declared "safe" and are not required to continue to the scoring line/plate.
• These are live ball calls. Umpires should make the appropriate call then focus on any remaining runners.

SCORING LINE/PLATE

• All plays at home are treated like force outs for the out/safe call.

• Runners must have a foot on the ground touching the scoring line / scoring plate (or have foot down past the line) before a defender possessing the ball touches the strike mat. Note: A runner's foot on the ground beyond the scoring line/scoring plate is deemed to have touched the plate.

• Runners are out at home if they cross through any of the batter's box.

• These are live ball calls. Umpires make call then focus on other runners.

DEFENSES

The number of defenders for each division varies. The short-handed rule allows teams to play one defender short of their base defense.

• Monday 10 defenders
• Tuesday, Thursday 11 defenders
• Short-handed teams must take an out the first time an injured/missing batter misses an at-bat. After that, simply skip the batter without penalty.
• If a team becomes short-handed due to a player ejection, an out is recorded each time the missing spot comes due.

FLIP-FLOP RULE

• Mandatory when home team trails by 10 or more runs entering the open inning. In this case, home team bats first in open inning. If home team still trails after three outs, game is over. If game is tied or home team takes lead, the visiting team gets its at-bat.

MERCY RULES

• Major Plus only: 22 runs after four innings or 15 after five innings. (These teams may score up to 7 runs per inning until open inning.)

• All other divisions: 20 runs after four innings or 15 after five innings. (These teams may score up to 5 runs per inning until open inning.)
• End game during visitor's at-bat if home team is mathematically eliminated (cannot prevent mercy rule).

HOME RUNS

• Home runs (and four-base awards) are walk-offs. No need to touch a base.

• All home runs over the limit are dead ball outs. (McAvoy Limit = 0) Track all home runs, including excess ones.

OPEN INNINGS

• Umpire must announce time has expired the moment it occurs.

• Once time expires, finish the inning in progress. The next inning (or the seventh inning if reached first) is the open or unlimited-run inning.

• Failure to make the "time has expired" announcement will result in an additional inning being played.

• Watch your clock closely. Keep both coaches informed of time remaining..

START OF GAME TIME

• Start game clock when plate conference ends: 67 minutes for seeding games, 72 minutes for bracket games, and 82 minutes for championships.

Monday 70 minutes, No new inning after 65 minutes. Tues/Thurs 90+ minutes.

KEY GAME DUTIES

• Record all runs scored and home runs hit. Confirm score and homers hit with each bench every half inning. (McAvoy use white board on the backstop)

• Track the number of balls hit over the fence, even if they are outs.

• Starting with the fourth inning, clearly announce time remaining to both teams at each half-inning break. • If working scoreboard present, use it. • Eject players for F-bombs or intimidation tactics toward umps, opponents.

TIE-BREAKER

• If open inning ends tied, each team begins the extra inning with the last completed batter from the previous inning at second base.

• Teams cannot use a courtesy runner or substitute until that player has advanced at least one base.

• Should the proper runner be unable to continue due to injury, an out is recorded and the next previous batter becomes the proper runner.

• All international tie-breaker innings are open innings.

PROTESTS

• **If a team asks for a director, call the director to the fence.**

• There is no charge for protests, but most protests must be done before the next pitch. Call the director immediately. There is no protest for judgement calls – only for rule interpretations.

MUSIC/NOISE-MAKERS

• Artificial noise-makers and music are allowed as long as they don't interfere with the game or contain inappropriate language.

Bats
• **No Senior Bats!!!** USSSA 1.20 or ASA (USA) Bats only.

NOTE: *Any umpire walking away from an assignment will be fined five games pay.*

Umpires cannot play in a session they are working.