



# Official Sport Rules

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**2023 National Senior Games**

Presented by Humana

**QUALIFYING PROCEDURES AND RULES OF COMPETITION  
GOVERNING THE 2023 NATIONAL SENIOR GAMES**

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The following qualifying procedures and rules of competition for the 2023 National Senior Games are based upon those set forth by the recognized national governing body for each sport. For the National Senior Games, however, some sport rules have been modified and/or revised in the best interest of the competitors. The National Senior Games reserves the right to refuse entry to the Games to individuals or teams for any reason.

These qualifying procedures and rules of competition have been approved by the National Games Committee and the Board of Directors of the National Senior Games Association. These rules may be subject to change prior to the 2023 event. Any changes or updates will be posted on [www.NSGA.com](http://www.NSGA.com).

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## SPORT RULES, REGULATIONS & FORMAT

The following are the qualifying procedures and rules of competition governing the 2023 National Senior Games Softball Championships in Columbus, OH.

### A. QUALIFYING DATES

The qualifying period for the 2023 National Senior Games will run from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.

Competition completed after December 31, 2022 will not be considered for qualifying for the 2023 National Senior Games.

### QUALIFICATION OPTIONS

An athlete may qualify for the 2023 National Senior Games presented by Humana in several ways. The options include Qualify by Place; Minimum Performance Standard (MPS); Qualifying Down; Reciprocal Qualification; Bonus Events and Limited Events. See Appendix A.

### B. AGE FOR COMPETITION AT QUALIFYING SITES

Age divisions for all competition at qualifying sites shall be established by the Member Organization, within the following guidelines. A date later than December 31 of the qualifying year may not be used to determine the age division in which an athlete competes at the qualifying site.

Athletes must compete in a qualifying event and be 50 years of age on or before December 31, 2022 to be eligible for the 2023 National Senior Games.

### C. AGE FOR COMPETITION AT THE 2022 NATIONAL SENIOR GAMES

Athletes must be 50 years of age on or before December 31, 2022 to be eligible for the 2023 National Senior Games.

Age division for all singles competition at the 2023 National Senior Games will be determined by the athlete's age as of December 31, 2023. Age division for all doubles and mixed doubles competition will be determined by the younger age of the two players as of December 31, 2023. Age division for all relay competition will be determined by the age of the youngest relay team member as of December 31, 2023.

Age division for all team competition will be determined by the age of the youngest team player as of December 31, 2023. For example, a team consisting of eight players ages 65 or older and one player age 63 will compete in the 60+ age division.

The following age divisions will apply to both men and women for all individual, doubles and relay competitions: 50-54; 55-59; 60-64; 65-69; 70-74; 75-79; 80-84; 85-89; 90-94; 95-99; and 100+.

All team sports are divided into the following divisions for both men and women: 50+; 55+; 60+; 65+, 70+, and 75+. In addition, 3-on-3 basketball shall have an 80+ and 85+ age division.

Individual athletes may not use their performances at a qualifying event to qualify for a higher age bracket using the minimum performance standards of the higher age bracket.

### D. QUALIFICATION FOR "LIMITED" EVENTS

The NSGA defines a "limited" event as one in which an athlete can qualify in ways other than by participating in a NSGA qualifying games. Events that are considered "limited" are 20K and 40K cycling, hammer throw, pole vault, 5K/10K road race, triathlon and the following non-ambulatory sports - bowling and shuffleboard. The rules for qualifying for these events are as follows.

1. If a "limited" event (except triathlon) is offered at the NSGA qualifying games in an athlete's home state, the athlete *must* qualify for that event by participating in a NSGA qualifying games and by satisfying the qualifying requirements for that event for athletes who compete in a NSGA qualifying games.
2. If a "limited" event is *not* offered at the NSGA qualifying games in an athlete's home state, the athlete may qualify for that event by meeting the following criteria:

- a. For 20K or 40K cycling road race an athlete must submit verification of having completed one cycling road race of the event length or better between January 1 and December 31, 2022. An athlete qualifying in either of the cycling road races (20K and 40K) is reciprocally qualified in the other.
- b. If your state did not offer the 5K and 10K road race an athlete must submit verification of having completed one 5K or 10K event between January 1 and December 31, 2022. The road race events are reciprocal. If you compete in a 5K or 10K road race event; you will qualify for both.
- c. For pole vault an athlete must submit verification of having met the NSGA minimum performance standard for pole vault in any USA Track & Field sanctioned competition between January 1 and December 31, 2022.
- d. For hammer throw an athlete must submit verification of having competed in one USA Track & Field sanctioned competitions between January 1 and December 31, 2022.
- e. For triathlon an athlete must submit verification of having completed one triathlon between January 1 and December 31, 2022. All triathletes have the opportunity to participate under the “limited” event criteria regardless if a state offers the event.
- f. For non-ambulatory bowling and shuffleboard an athlete must submit verification of having competed in one non-ambulatory competition between January and December 31, 2022.
- g. Athletes must submit to the NSGA office by no later than March 15, 2023, a Limited Event Verification form, available on the NSGA website, along with a copy of the official results or other public document illustrating the results.

#### E. DOUBLES PARTNERS

Doubles partners who qualify together are not required to play together at the 2023 National Senior Games. All participants must have qualified for the **SPORT** in which they intend to participate, with one partner having qualified in the **EVENT** in which they intend to participate. The NSGA and LOC **WILL NOT** assign partners at the Games. Badminton, bowling, pickleball, racquetball, table tennis and tennis doubles partners must be of the same gender. Note: Badminton, bowling, pickleball, racquetball, table tennis and tennis also have a separate mixed doubles event. Shuffleboard open doubles may be of mixed gender. All doubles and mixed doubles pairs will compete in the age division of the younger partner as of December 31, 2023. You cannot compete in an age division younger than the youngest partner.

Athletes may compete with only one partner per event. At a NSGA Qualifier, you may partner with someone who has already qualified at another NSGA Qualifier.

All Doubles teams made up of one in-state and one out-of-state athlete will be designated as an out-of-state team.

Athletes whose doubles partners 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 partner must have qualified in the sport they wish to enter, at a qualifying state game.

#### F. TEAMS

A maximum number of players may be added to team rosters following qualification in accordance with the chart below:

Basketball: 3                  Volleyball: 4                  Softball: 5

Any player or any player/coach must have been listed on the roster of a team as a player that participated in a NSGA qualifying games in that sport to be eligible for addition to a roster (Excluding Open Sports). Documentation of player registration must be provided by the State Coordinator to the NSGA. All other team and qualifying rules apply. Non-player(s) added to a roster are not subject to player addition limits, but the total number of team members may not exceed the roster limit for the sport.

The captain will declare the state represented for teams with players from multiple states. If the captain does not declare, the captain’s state of residence will be used as the represented state.

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.

All registration and team rules apply to non-playing coaches, non-playing captains and non-playing bench personnel with the following exceptions:

1. Non-playing coaches, non-playing captains or non-playing bench personnel may represent more than one team in the same sport, each of which must be in different age divisions.
2. Non-playing coaches, non-playing captains or non-playing bench personnel are not subject to age and gender requirements.
3. 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. This rule applies only for basketball, softball and volleyball. Athletes who compete in a team sport may serve as a non-playing coach, non-playing captain or non-playing bench representative for additional teams in the same sport, provided the teams are in different age divisions. The athlete may not serve as a non-playing coach, non-playing captain or non-playing bench representative for a team in the same age division.
4. Non-playing coaches, non-playing captains or non-playing bench personnel are not required to meet qualifying standards for their sport. However, they must be listed on a team roster at the state level.

Age divisions for all team competition will be determined by the age of the youngest team player as of December 31, 2023.

#### **G. RESIDENTS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

Individuals and teams from foreign countries may qualify for the national competition in the following ways:

1. By competing in an NSGA qualifying event and meeting the NSGA qualifying criteria for the event/sport.
2. By meeting the NSGA qualifying criteria in a "limited" event.

Sufficient information shall be submitted to the NSGA to document the athlete's accomplishment.

1. All results must be translated into English.
2. Athletes must be 50 years old on or before December 31, 2022.
3. Athletes must provide accurate contact information, including mailing address, email address, phone number and copies of photo identification. Photo identification must include date of birth.
4. Athletes must adhere to all rules and regulations of the NSGA, including entry deadlines.
5. Qualifying must take place between January 1 and December 31, 2022.
6. Residents of foreign countries who compete at the National Senior Games shall be eligible for all awards.

#### **H. DETERMINING WHO QUALIFIES**

NSGA qualifying games are responsible for determining qualifiers at their games and for advising the NSGA who has qualified. NSGA qualifying games that permit and encourage participation by out-of-state residents are classified by the NSGA as "open." (Note: This should not be confused with "limited" events.)

Each event allows for a specific number of qualifiers. If out-of-state residents qualify at an "Open" qualifying games, they will not take away a qualifying spot from a state resident. "Open" games may qualify the number of state residents specified for each event in addition to the out-of-state qualifiers. The NSGA definition of an athlete's state of residence is that state in which the person resides for at least six months out of the year.

All Doubles teams made up of one in-state and one out-of-state athlete will be designated as an out-of-state team. Competition must take place to determine qualifiers. If there is only one individual entered in an age group, that athlete must enter and complete the event in order to be given the gold medal and to qualify for the National Senior Games. Athletes should be placed in the age division nearest their own in order to compete. Competition for the athletes in this "closest age division" shall be considered exhibition.

If there is only one team entered in an age division, that team should be given exhibition opportunities with the closest age division. No team shall be qualified without participating in a qualifying game.

The NSGA shall determine whether an athlete has met the qualifying criteria for "limited" sports events.

Athletes may also qualify by meeting or exceeding the Minimum Performance Standards (MPS) in Archery, Golf, Race Walk, Road Race, Swimming and Track & Field at a 2022 qualifying games. Athletes must meet or exceed the MPS based on their age in the 2022 qualifying year. In general, the MPS is based on the time, distance or score of the 6th place finisher from the previous National Senior Games, plus or minus 10% (Plus 10% for timed events; minus 10% for distance and scored events). If this formula would relax the MPS, a change will not be made and the previous MPS will continue to be used. An MPS will not be changed by more than 10% per Games. MPS shall decrease or be equal in difficulty as age division's increase. The NSGA reserves the right to use judgment based on experience when setting

the standard, therefore, a standard may not always match the formula if applied to the results of the most recent National Games.

#### I. NSGA DEFINITION OF A PROFESSIONAL

Professional athletes shall not be eligible to compete in the National Senior Games in the sport in which they are a professional until 20 years after the date they last competed as a professional. They may compete in other sports in which they have not competed professionally.

A professional is someone who competes in a sport for money as a primary source of personal revenue. People who compete in a sport in which minor amounts of money are given as prizes are not deemed professionals. Individuals whose primary activity is teaching a sport but occasionally play for a minor amount of money is also not deemed professionals.

The NSGA shall have the final authority to determine who is deemed a professional for the purpose of competing in NSGA events. The NSGA reserves the right to determine professional status based on established National Governing Body (NGB) standards and professional competition history.

#### J. UNIFORMS AT THE NATIONAL SENIOR GAMES

**PARTICIPANTS:** All athletes must wear athletic-type clothing and shoes that are usual and customary for the sport in which they are competing. Street-type clothing and shoes that are inappropriate may cause disqualification. Competition Managers have been given authorization by the NSGA to make this determination.

**TEAM UNIFORMS:** Team clothing (shirts, pants, and shorts) must be of like design and color. Basketball and Soccer teams must have both “home” and “away” uniforms with permanently attached numbers on front and back. Sponsors may be added to the jersey but cannot interfere with number placement. Refer to each sport for specific placement of numbers. Uniforms must be free of inappropriate symbols or wording.

#### K. PROTEST POLICY

Any person desiring to make a protest with regard to any aspect of competition at the National Senior Games shall make such protest to the National Chair of the competition in question. A protest fee of \$50 cash for an individual or \$100 cash fee for a team and a completed Protest Form must be received within 30 minutes of the conclusion of the game, match, heat, or event under protest. National Chairs will have the blank protest forms. Protests after this time WILL NOT be considered. The National Chair and a NSGA Director will evaluate the protest and render a decision. If the protest is valid, the \$50/\$100 charge will be reimbursed to the person submitting the protest. If the protest is not valid, the NSGA reserves the right to retain the Protest Fee. All decisions by the NSGA Director of Events and Programs are final and not subject to further appeal.

Judgement Decisions: Players or managers may NOT protest any official's judgement calls.

#### L. EVENT ENTRY LIMITS

Athletes may enter no more than two individual sports at the 2023 National Senior Games. You may register for an **unlimited** number of **OPEN SPORTS:** Cornhole, Powerwalk, Recumbent Cycling Time Trials, Soccer and Triathlon Relay. **It is your responsibility to make sure the sports you enter won't cause scheduling conflicts.** Refunds are not provided for time conflicts due to overlapping events. NSGA and the LOC will not accommodate individual scheduling requests.

Individual sports are as follows:

Archery	Golf	Racquetball	Table Tennis
Badminton	Pickleball	Road Race	Tennis
Bowling	Power Walk	Shuffleboard	Track & Field
Cornhole	Race Walk	Swimming	Triathlon
Cycling			

Except as noted below, there is no restriction to the number of events within an individual sport an athlete may enter. For example, in track & field the events are: 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1500 meters; discus; hammer throw; high jump; javelin; long jump; pole vault; shot put and triple jump. Athletes may enter all the events within track & field for which they are qualified.

The exceptions are:

1. In **archery**, an athlete may enter only one event.
2. In **swimming**, an athlete may enter a maximum of six events, including bonus events.
3. In **tennis**, which has singles, doubles and mixed doubles events, athletes may enter only two events.

In addition to two individual sports, athletes may compete in **two team sports** (basketball, softball, volleyball). 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.

The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) and the NSGA may place a cap on the total number of entries for any and/or all sports and/or events in the best interest of games management. At the time this rulebook was printed, the necessary caps had not been determined. Therefore, these rules will serve as a guideline for both the LOC and the NSGA. However, additional modifications may be made in order to meet the necessary caps. Member Organizations will be notified any time a cap or modification is necessary.

The NSGA and the LOC will not accommodate individual scheduling requests.

#### **M. REQUIRED CREDENTIALS**

Any player unable to provide the required credentials on the playing field shall be declared ineligible to compete until he/she can produce them. An opposing team manager may request verification of a player's eligibility. Should a player play and be unable to provide the required credentials he/she or his/her team will forfeit all games in which the player participated. A valid, government issued photo identification card, such as a driver's license shall be the only age and residency proof accepted.

For team sports, all non-playing coaches, non-playing captains and non-playing bench personnel must be credentialed for access to the field of play.

Medals and ribbons will only be issued to properly credentialed personnel. The NSGA reserves the right to revoke any credential at any time.

#### **N. SEEDING**

All seeding shall be random except as follows.

1. Track and swimming heats will be seeded in accordance with standard national governing body procedures.
2. Table Tennis will use USATT rankings to assist in pool seeding if available.
3. Tennis seedings are established by following the USTA "All Factors" method. This includes considering any available information such as USTA rankings, NTRP ratings, UTR ratings, recent head to head and common opponent results and other information available or provided to the tournament chairs.
4. Racquetball will use USA Racquetball rankings to assist in the pool seeding if available.
5. Softball will use tournament history, past National Senior Games results and current team rating.
6. Basketball will use tournament history and past state game and National Senior Games results.
7. Results of past National Senior Games will be used whenever possible.
8. Home state information will be made available to the Competition Manager. Every effort will be made to schedule preliminary round matches between players/teams of different geographic areas.

#### **O. NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY RULES**

All sports/events shall be governed by the rules of the NGB for that sport. The NSGA has modified some of these rules in the best interest of the participants. All rules shall apply as stated in the NGB and NSGA rulebooks. NGB rulebooks in effect the opening day of the National Games, shall govern the 2023 National Senior Games, unless otherwise noted.

In case of conflict between NGB and NSGA rules, NSGA rules shall govern.

#### **P. HOW TO SUGGEST A RULE CHANGE FOR SUBSEQUENT GAMES**

Suggestions for rules changes may be made in writing to the NSGA up to 30 days after the 2023 National Senior Games. NSGA rules are reviewed and approved by the NSGA National Games Committee and Board of Directors and are normally published in February of qualifying years.

#### **Q. DEFAULT DURING COMPETITION**

Athletes or teams that forfeit during pool play rounds shall not be permitted to advance to the championship or consolation brackets except where such a forfeit is the result of a verified medical reason, or a good-faith effort was made to compete. Verification by a member of the Games' medical staff of an athlete's injury and capability to

continue must be submitted to and subsequently approved by the Competition Manager and the NSGA prior to the athlete being permitted to continue. A good-faith effort to compete will be determined by the Competition Manager and the NSGA.

Athletes or teams that forfeit during championship or consolation play shall not be eligible for awards except where such forfeit is the result of a verified medical condition, or a good-faith effort was made to compete, and does not result in a Did Not Finish under NSGA or NGB rules. Their award spot will be left open and subsequent places will not be moved up. Verification by a member of the Games' medical staff of the athlete's injury must be provided to and subsequently approved by the Competition Manager and NSGA prior to receipt of any awards. A good-faith effort to compete will be determined by the Competition Manager and the NSGA.

#### **R. ADDITIONAL QUALIFIERS**

The NSGA reserves the right to alter qualifying standards prior to competition.

#### **S. POLICY FOR GOVERNING DETERMINATION OF GENDER FOR THE PURPOSES OF COMPETITION IN NATIONAL EVENTS**

The following policy shall govern national competition sanctioned by the National Senior Games Association and serve as a guideline for Member Organizations.

The NSGA does not routinely require its participants to provide proof of gender. There may, however, be rare circumstances in which an athlete's gender may be called into question.

In these circumstances, an athlete shall be considered to have provided adequate proof of gender by presenting one of the following documents:

1. A valid photo identification card such as a driver's license, passport or green card that states the athlete's gender, OR
2. A copy of a valid in-force medical or health insurance policy that unequivocally states the athlete's gender. Birth certificates shall not be acceptable.

#### **T. NSGA ABLE BODIED ATHLETE POLICY**

The National Senior Games is comprised of twenty sports for "able-bodied" athletes. At the discretion of the NSGA, athletes with physical disabilities may be allowed to compete insofar as any and all handicap devices used by the athlete falls within certain rules and regulations to ensure fairness in competition. The NSGA will abide by the rules of the National Governing Body of the athlete's sport to govern circumstances regarding athletes with disabilities in able-bodied competition for specific sport instances. The use of any technical device that incorporates springs, wheels or any other element that provides the user with an advantage over another athlete not using such a device will be prohibited in athletic competition.

#### **U. NSGA NON-AMBULATORY ATHLETE POLICY**

The National Senior Games is comprised of three "limited" non-ambulatory sports – bowling, cornhole and shuffleboard. The NSGA will abide by the rules of the National Governing Body of the athlete's sport to govern circumstances regarding athletes with disabilities. The NSGA has the right to modify the rules depending on the abilities of the participants.

#### **V. NSGA BANNED SUBSTANCE POLICY**

The NSGA does not currently test for banned or performance enhancing drugs. If an athlete is found to be using drugs by any other agency or governing body, they will also be banned from NSGA competitions until the sanction or banned is removed. The NSGA will communicate with NGB's for a current list of athletes.

#### **W. OPEN SPORTS**

Open sports are events that do not require qualifying at a State Senior Games qualifier. Open Sports can become qualifiers the following games if the number of athletes warrant the change.

#### **X. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

Any athlete, coach, captain, non-bench personnel or team that displays unsportsmanlike conduct on or off the playing field or court, including but not limited to abusive/foul language, harassment of tournament officials/umpires, interference during the seeding process may be ejected from the facility and eliminated from the competition.



**Y. DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

NSGA does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, Disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, marital status or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

## SOFTBALL Team Softball

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### 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 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.teamusa.org) or call:

USA Softball  
2801 NE 50<sup>th</sup> 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.