

USA SOFTBALL

Procedural Code

2026



This copy of the USA Softball “**USAS**” Procedural Code became effective on January 01, **2026**. USA Softball does have the authority to make emergency changes from time to time and highly recommends that you review the official copy of the USA Softball Procedural Code which can be found on the USA Softball website at **WWW.USASOFTBALL.COM**. In the event a conflict in language between this printed version of the Procedural Code and the version on the internet, the official copy of the USA Softball Procedural Code found on the USA Softball website controls. If there is incorrect information regarding this Procedural Code published or issued via voice, written, electronic or any other form of communication, whether by USA Softball personnel or not, the provisions and intent of the Procedural Code found on the website will always prevail.

PLEASE REVIEW THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT

USA SOFTBALL PROCEDURAL CODE PREAMBLE

WARNING, DISCLOSURE AND DISCLAIMER

One of the primary purposes of USA Softball's official playing rules (including its equipment standards) and USA Softball's Procedural Code is to promote competitive balance and to preserve the integrity of the sport of amateur softball. USA Softball's Bylaws, Procedural Code, and Playing Rules should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators or others will be safe or free from injury or harm. There are risks and dangers incidental to the game of softball, including specifically (but not limited to) the danger of being injured by thrown bats, thrown balls, batted balls or other objects Softball poses a risk to its participants, spectators and other persons at or near USA Softball events or practices. Softball is a vigorous team sport at times involving severe cardiovascular stress and violent physical contact. Softball involves certain risk, including but not limited to death, serious neck and spinal injuries resulting in complete or partial paralysis, brain damage and serious injury to virtually all bones, joints, muscles and internal organs, and equipment provided for the protection of the participants may be inadequate to prevent serious injury. It is further disclosed that softball involves a particularly high risk of ankle, knee, head, and neck injury. In addition, participation in USA Softball events may involve activities incidental thereto, including but not limited to, travel to and from the site activity, participation at sites that may be remote from available medical assistance, and possible reckless conduct of other participants. Participants engaging in softball and activities incidental to softball do so with knowledge of the danger involved and agree to accept any and all inherent risks of property damage, personal injury, or death. Parents, family, guests, participants and spectators assume all risk and danger of personal injury, losses, damages to person or property and all hazards arising from, incidental to or related in any way to the game of softball.

DISCLAIMER: USA SOFTBALL, ITS OFFICIALS, AGENTS, EMPLOYEES, SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, CONTRACTORS, LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS AND AFFILIATES ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY INJURY (INCLUDING DEATH) OR LOSS OF PROPERTY TO ANY PERSON SUFFERED WHILE WATCHING, PLAYING, PRACTICING, OR IN ANY OTHER WAY AT OR INVOLVED IN THE GAME OF SOFTBALL FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER, INCLUDING ORDINARY NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF USA SOFTBALL OR ITS AGENTS, EMPLOYEES, SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, THE OWNERS AND LESSORS OF THE PREMISES AND ALL OTHERS WHO ARE INVOLVED AND INCLUDING THE RECKLESS CONDUCT OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS. USA SOFTBALL EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS ANY AND ALL LIABILITY FOR ANY INJURY OR PROPERTY LOSS RELATED IN ANY WAY TO THE GAME OF SOFTBALL. This warning, disclosure and disclaimer are intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by applicable laws. If any portion is held invalid the remainder of the warning, disclosure and disclaimer will continue in full legal force and effect.

USA SOFTBALL STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

VISION *To make softball the preeminent sport in the U.S. by connecting and inspiring the softball community from the recreational to international levels.*

MISSION **USA Softball is the National Governing Body of softball in the United States.**

USA Softball provides opportunities for participation through competition, education, and leadership with a commitment to promote the growth and development of the sport.

VALUES

- **Education + Safety**
- **Diversity, Equity + Inclusion**
- **Integrity + Passion**
- **Teamwork + Sportsmanship**

GOALS

- **Structure the organization to effectively respond to changing softball demographics and to set national standards.**
- **Provide initiatives for the growth of the game in collaboration with bat and ball sports.**
- **Increase opportunities and resources to create a culture of equity and inclusion.**
- **Foster an environment where safety and physical and mental well-being are top priorities of all USA Softball participants.**
- **Leverage partnerships and industry-leading technology for the benefit of our membership.**
- **Promote an atmosphere that reflects the gold standard of teamwork, comradery, and enthusiasm.**

**USA SOFTBALL PROCEDURAL CODE
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

ARTICLE	SUBJECT	PAGE
PART ONE		
PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS		
101	Principles	6
102	Jurisdiction	6
103	Definitions	6
104	Regulations	10
PART TWO		
ORGANIZATION		
201	Membership	11
202	Regions	12
203	Territories	13
204	Sections	13
205	Commissioners	13
206	Umpires	13
207	Complaint Procedures	16
PART THREE		
ELIGIBILITY, COMPETITION AND TOURNAMENTS		
301	Eligibility	17
302	Rosters	23
303	Pick-up Players	23
304	USA Softball Drug Control Procedure and Policy	25
305	Suspension and Complaint Procedures	25
306	Divisions and Classifications of Championship Play Defined	25
307	Classifications of Championship Play	28
308	Levels of Championship Play	34
309	Dates of Championship Play	35
310	General Regulations of Championship Play	37
311	Championship Draw	41
312	Regional Tournaments	47
313	USA Softball Gold Qualifying Tournaments (Junior Olympic GOLD Only)	48
314	National Championship Finals	50
315	National Invitational Tournaments	55
316	Levels of Non-Championship Play	55

ARTICLE	SUBJECT	PAGE
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**PART FOUR
ADMINISTRATION**

401	Elected Officers	57
402	Board of Directors	57
403	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	57
404	National Council	57
405	Commissioners	58
406	Association and Registration Requirements	60
407	Junior Olympic Commissioners	61
408	Local Association Athlete Representatives	62
409	Player Representatives	62
410	Umpires-in-Chief	63
411	Affiliated and Allied Members	64
412	USA Softball Hall of Fame	65

**PART FIVE
BUSINESS PROCEDURES**

501	Council Meetings	68
502	Panels and Forums	68
503	Procedural Code Amendments and Rule Changes	70
504	Trademarks	73
505	Assignment of Copyright	73

**PART SIX
BID PROCEDURES**

601	Bidding for a National Council Meeting	75
602	Bidding for National Championship Finals	75
603	Fast Pitch, Modified Pitch and Slow Pitch Bids	78
604	Tournament Contract	79
605	Financial Obligations	80
606	Championship Play Awards	80
607	Tournament Reports	84

USA SOFTBALL “USAS” PROCEDURAL CODE
(Adopted January 27, 1977, with amendments through 2026)

PART ONE
PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

Article 101 PRINCIPLES. It shall be the responsibility of each member of USA Softball to strive to fulfill the goals of USA Softball and to promote the sport of softball. At a minimum, each member of USA Softball:

- A. Shall follow the rules and regulations of USA Softball as established by the USA Softball Bylaws, Procedural Code and Playing Rules.
- B. Shall support USA Softball's programs that promote the sport of softball and educate players, coaches, officials, volunteers and the public about the game.
- C. Shall act at all times with the utmost civility and sportsmanlike conduct, promoting wholesome, safe competition.
- D. Shall strive to provide programs that encompass fairness to the participants and promote fair play and sportsmanship.
- E. Shall take seriously his/her responsibility as a role model and encourage competitiveness in a positive manner.

Article 102 JURISDICTION. The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) recognizes USA Softball as the governing body of amateur softball in the United States. USA Softball agrees to submit, upon demand of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, to binding arbitration in any controversy involving the opportunity of any amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator or official to participate in amateur softball competition, as provided for in the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee's Constitution and Bylaws. USA Softball shall remain free from outside restraint and shall independently determine, and control all matters central to its governance, and shall not delegate to another, such determination and control.

Article 103 DEFINITIONS. Whenever used in this Procedural Code, unless otherwise specifically mentioned, the following words, terms and phrases are defined to mean:

Additional Player is a player that has been added to a team's championship roster and meets all the requirements set forth in **Article 301** and **302**.

Association is USA Softball, the national organization.

NOTE: See definition below of Local Association.

Bylaws are the regulations that govern USA Softball and its members.

Championship Play is a tournament or competition from which the winner or the winner and other selected teams may advance to higher levels of play of this Association (See **Article 308**).

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is an employee of USA Softball who shall be the leader of management and vested with the authority to make decisions on behalf of management. The Board shall hire and oversee the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Classification is level of play within a division.

Commissioner is the commissioner of a local association. A commissioner is the principal liaison between a local association area and USA Softball.

Defending Champion

Adult Team. A team composed of five or more of the players that won the championship of that particular division of play the preceding season. These five players must be physically present at the championship tournament site for the team to be eligible.

Junior Olympic Team. The top designated teams in the Gold Championship Finals (See **Article 315 K**) and in each of the Class A National Championship Finals shall receive a berth to the following year's Junior Olympic Girls' USA Softball National Championship Finals in the team's current or succeeding year's age classification provided the team has five participating players from the previous year's roster on the current year's roster and physically present at the current championship tournament site prior to the start of their first game.

NOTE: The defending champion berth will be awarded to the team composed of five or more participating players that won the championship of that particular age classification the preceding year.

Split/Separate Teams. If a team is eligible to return to a National Championship Final, and splits into two or more separate teams, with each meeting the above-mentioned criteria, the team with the most players from the previous year's team receives the berth. If multiple teams have the same number of returning players, the berth will be awarded based on the previous year's registered manager. If the previous year's manager does not return, the berth will be awarded based on a coin flip or draw at the National Office.

Division refers to the different types of championship competition conducted by this Association (See **Article 306**).

Doping is the administration of or use by the competing athlete of any substance foreign to the body or of any physiological substance taken in an abnormal quantity or taken by an abnormal route of entry into the body, with the sole intention of increasing in an artificial and unfair manner their performance in competition. When necessity demands medical treatment with any substance that because of its nature, dosage or application is able to boost the athlete's performance in competition in an artificial and unfair manner, this is to be regarded as doping.

First Round of Championship Tournament Bracket is completed when each team has won or lost a game.

Full-Time Employee is a person who works at least the minimum number of hours normally worked by a full-time employee in that particular job or industry.

Full-Time Student is determined by the registration requirements of an educational institution.

His (e.g. he, him) is also to include female gender.

Host Team is a team that is representing a local association in a regional or national championship tournament and said team must be from the local association hosting the tournament.

Ineligible Person/Team is a team, player, manager, official, or member who is not eligible to participate in USA Softball championship competition or USA Softball sanctioned events, (A suspended person is included in this definition).

Invitational Tournament is a tournament that does not lead to a championship tournament.

Local Association refers to a member association.

Mandatory Classification is the process by which teams are moved up a class based on their performance in the preceding year's National Championship Final (See **Article 307**). To qualify for a berth in the present year's National Championship Final in the higher classification, the team must meet the provisions of 'Defending Champion' (See **Article 103**).

Members are those individuals, teams and organizations that come under **Article 201**.

National Office is the national headquarters of the Association located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Participation in Championship Play is being available at the tournament and signing the USA Softball Official Tournament Signature Form. Participation in sanctioned events is being available to play, coach, manage, umpire and assist in the organization or otherwise be a part of a sanctioned event other than as an observer.

Pick-up Player is a player who has been added to a team's championship roster and meets all the requirements set forth in **Article 303**.

Player Release is for a player that has participated on a team in championship play. They may be released from a team after participating in Championship Play, but it shall be prior to the State/Metro Association roster change deadline and shall have written approval from the Coach and Player/Parent Guardian (if under age 18). For Junior Olympic Players, if the Manager/Coach and Parent/Guardian are one and the same, there needs to be an additional Manager/Coach signature. For Adult Players if the Manager/Coach and the Player are one and the same, there needs to be an additional Manager/Coach signature. The Player Release Form must be approved via signature by the State/Metro Association Commissioner or his/her designee. A player may only be released one time. If a request to

be released is denied by the coach, the player may appeal to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Player Representative is a representative from a local association.

Procedural Code is the operating regulations of USA Softball.

Qualified Team is a team who has earned and accepted a berth to a USA Softball National Championship Final.

Region is a geographical entity encompassing a specific number of local associations, as listed in **Article 202**.

Returning Team is a team that is eligible to return directly to a specified championship the following year. The team, in order to be eligible to return, must meet the provisions of 'defending champion', (See **Article 103**).

Sanctioned Tournament is a tournament approved by USA Softball or a local association.

Substitute Team is a team eligible to replace a qualifying team in the next level of championship play when the qualifying team is unable to advance. The substitute team must be the next highest finishing eligible team from the qualifying tournament. A substitute team may not replace a previous year's defending champion or a returning team in the current season's championship play.

Suspended Person/Team is a player, manager, official, team or other USA Softball member who has been found in violation of **Sections 15 or 16 of the USAS Bylaws** and is therefore ineligible to participate in USA Softball championship competition or USA Softball sanctioned events.

Team refers to but shall not be limited to the following: players, coaches, managers, trainers, scorekeepers and sponsors.

Team Personnel is defined as all coaches, managers, scorekeepers and other on field assistants that are required to meet the eligibility requirements of USA Softball.

Tournament Staff refers to a USA Softball Representative, Tournament Director, Umpire In Chief, Assistant Umpire In Chief and Umpire Coordinator. No manager, coach, player, family member may be involved in these roles at National Championship Finals.

Unsportsmanlike and Unprofessional Conduct refers to conduct that is detrimental or unbecoming to the purposes and objectives of USA Softball and/or its local associations.

USA Softball is the national organization.

Article 104 REGULATIONS.

- A. **Operating Regulations.** The Operating regulations of the Association are defined in this document, hereinafter referred to as the USA Softball Procedural Code, which is divided into six parts as follows:

Part One	Articles 101 - 199	Principles and Definitions
Part Two	Articles 201 - 299	Organization
Part Three	Articles 301 - 399	Eligibility, Competition and Tournaments
Part Four	Articles 401 - 499	Administration
Part Five	Articles 501 - 599	Business Procedures
Part Six	Articles 601 - 699	Bid Procedures

- B. **Order of Business.**

01. Robert's rules of order shall be the parliamentary law for all meetings of the association.
02. All meetings are open except when in executive session.

PART TWO ORGANIZATION

Article 201 MEMBERSHIP. Upon proper application and qualification, membership in USA Softball shall be available to state or metro associations, individuals, teams, umpires, scorekeepers as further defined in this Procedural Code and organizations on a voluntary basis who agree to be governed by the Bylaws, Procedural Code, playing rules and regulations of USA Softball.

A. **Local Associations.** The geographical area of the United States shall be divided into **62** state and metro associations each of which shall be represented by a commissioner who shall act as a liaison between such area and USA Softball. Local associations are defined as follows:

State Associations

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
The Carolinas
Central California
Northern California
Southern California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland-DC
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri

Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey

Metro Associations

Sacramento
San Francisco

Detroit
Minneapolis

Kansas City
St. Louis

New York	New York City
North Dakota	
Ohio	
Oklahoma	
Oregon	Portland
Pennsylvania	
Rhode Island	
South Dakota	
Tennessee	
Texas	Dallas-Fort Worth Houston
Utah	
Vermont	
Central Virginia	
Piedmont Virginia	
Washington	Seattle
West Virginia	
Wisconsin	
Wyoming	

- B. **Individual Membership.** Individuals acquire membership in USA Softball by paying applicable registration fees to their local association in one of the following categories:
01. Individual registration.
 02. Membership on a registered team in compliance with **Article 301**.
 03. Scorekeepers.
 04. Umpires.
- C. **Life Members.**
01. Life Members are those individuals who desire to aid in the promotion of the game of softball, and who have previously been members of the USA Softball or served as members of the Council of the USA Softball.
 02. Life Members shall pay lifetime dues of **\$150.00** and, without voice, also receive the official publication of the USA Softball as often as it is printed or electronically created, and an official USA Softball Participant Manual. In addition, a membership plaque shall be issued to each life member.

Article 202 REGIONS. The local associations as defined in **Article 201** shall be organized into ten regions.

<u>REGION</u>	<u>ASSOCIATIONS</u>
1 Northeast	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, New York City, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont.
2 Central Atlantic	Maryland-DC-Delaware, Ohio, Central Virginia, Piedmont Virginia and West Virginia.
3 Southeast	Georgia, Florida, The Carolinas and Tennessee.

4	South	Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.
5	Southwest	Oklahoma, Texas, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and New Mexico.
6	Midwest	Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Chicago, Michigan and Detroit.
7	Mid-America	Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Kansas City, St. Louis and Nebraska.
8	Northern	Minnesota, Minneapolis, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.
9	Northwest Mountain	Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Portland, Utah, Washington, Seattle Tacoma and Wyoming.
10	Pacific Coast	Arizona, Central California, Northern California, Southern California, Sacramento, San Francisco, Hawaii and Nevada.

Article 203 TERRITORIES. The ten regions listed in **Article 202** shall be organized into four territories as follows:

Eastern.	Regions 1 and 2
Northern.	Regions 6, 7 and 8
Southern.	Regions 3, 4 and 5
Western.	Regions 9 and 10

Article 204 SECTIONS. The ten regions listed in **Article 202** shall be organized into two sections as follows:

East.	Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6
West.	Regions 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10

Article 205 COMMISSIONERS. A local association commissioner is the principal liaison between a local association and the USA Softball.

Article 206 UMPIRES.

A. Membership.

01. An umpire may become a member by placing his/her membership with the local association commissioner where they reside or work either as an umpire or in his/her regular occupation.
02. Umpires become members of USA Softball on a voluntary basis and agree to be governed by the Bylaws, Procedural Code, playing rules and regulations of USA Softball. Registration by an umpire does not establish an employer/employee relationship and no umpire is considered an employee of USA Softball or the local association but is instead acting as an independent contractor.
03. Membership is on an annual basis and shall expire December 31 of each year.
04. A member of the armed forces may become a 'military' registered umpire only while stationed overseas, by registering through his/her military base athletic office.
05. Umpire membership may be declined or revoked for unethical, immoral or unprofessional conduct. Before declining or revoking membership, the umpire must be given the same hearing procedure afforded a team or team member as set forth in **Sections 15 and 16, Complaint Procedures, of the USAS Bylaws.**

B. Championship Play.

01. Only USA Softball-member umpires may be used in championship play.
02. All tournaments that lead toward national play require a minimum of two umpires per game.

C. Conduct.

01. **Use of Tobacco.** Umpires may not smoke or use tobacco like products on the playing field. This includes but is not limited to chewing, dipping and spitting.
02. **Use of Alcohol.** Umpires may not consume alcoholic beverages on a game day until assignments have been completed.

Article 207 COMPLAINT PROCEDURES. These are governed in accordance with **Sections 15 and 16 of the USAS Bylaws.**

PART THREE

ELIGIBILITY, COMPETITION AND TOURNAMENTS

Article 301 ELIGIBILITY.

A. Eligibility Compliance Required By Each Player, Manager and Team.

01. It is the duty of each player, player's parent (if applicable), manager, coach and team to review USA Softball's eligibility requirements and comply with USA Softball's eligibility requirements. Each team manager/coach is responsible for complying with the eligibility requirements and other requirements set forth in the USA Softball Procedural Code as to his/her team. This specifically includes, without limitation, eligibility requirements pertaining to proper classification, proper divisions, eligible pick up player requirements, eligible age requirements and all other eligibility requirements.
02. As to eligibility matters, any assurances or statements from USA Softball members, USA Softball commissioners or USA Softball officials other than USA Softball's Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) are not binding and shall not be binding upon USA Softball and shall not constitute a valid excuse for a team's, manager's or player's failure to comply with any eligibility requirement. USA Softball disclaims any and all liability for any player, team, manager or coach's reliance's upon assurances of persons other than USA Softball's CEO. USA Softball disclaims any and all liability for any player, team, manager or coach's failure to comply with all eligibility requirements.
03. Teams, players, coaches and managers that are ineligible under the USA Softball Procedural Code and that incur travel and other expenses in connection with a USA Softball tournament do so at his/her own risk and peril. Teams, players, coaches and managers that are ineligible under the USA Softball Procedural Code are subject to disqualification or forfeiture at any time, as otherwise provided for in the USA Softball Procedural Code (i.e. upon the timely protest of any other team or official).
04. Any USA Softball official's signature (i.e. Commissioner's signature) on a roster form or any other document shall not be considered as a determination of the eligibility of a player or team. Eligibility of players or teams shall be governed as otherwise provided in the Procedural Code. Any solicitation or invitation for a team to participate in a USA Softball tournament by a Tournament Director or other USA Softball Official shall not be considered a determination of that team's eligibility. Eligibility of players or teams shall be exclusively governed as provided in the Procedural Code.

B. International Eligibility Standards. USA Softball shall not adopt an eligibility standard that is more restrictive than that of the applicable international sports federation, the World Baseball Softball Confederation.

C. Team Eligibility.

01. **Team Registration.** A team must register with the local association in which the greatest number of its' players reside, and this number must be retained for the remainder of the season.

EXCEPTION: Teams in an adjoining county to a state or metro association may register with either the state or the metro association by mutual consent of all Commissioner's involved.

02. **Team Participation.** A team may register and participate in more than one division of play, but that team is limited to only one classification within a division of Championship play.

EXCEPTIONS:

- a. **All Divisions of Play.** Teams can play in a higher classification than his/her current classification. Participation in a higher classification could affect the team in his/her next USA Softball playing season.

Clarification: This allows teams to play up in level classification (Example: Class B to Class A) and age classification (Example: 12-Under to 14-Under)

- b. **Armed Services Teams.** The Women's Armed Services team must play in Women's Class Open Slow Pitch and the Men's Armed Services team may play in the Men's Class A and/or Class B Slow Pitch.

- c. **Fast Pitch.**

- i. In the Junior Olympic Girls' Fast Pitch 16-Under and 18-Under Classification, Class A teams are allowed to participate in any Gold Qualifying events and have the ability to return to Class A play provided the team did not earn a berth at the Gold level.
- ii. In all adult Fast Pitch, no USA Softball Men's National Team Member may participate below the Major level.

EXCEPTION: A member of the USA Softball Junior Men's National Team may participate below the Major level in a National Championship Final. Non-pitching members on the USA Softball Men's National Team may pitch at the Open level but cannot bat or assume any other defensive position.

EXCEPTION: Players who are two or more years separated from active participation on the Men's National Team, the Men's Junior National Team, or the Men's National Team Player Pool are eligible to participate at the Open level of play.

EXCEPTION: Players listed on the Restricted Players List who are two or more years separated from active participation on the Men's National Team, the Men's Junior National Team, or the Men's National Team Player Pool are eligible to participate at the Open level and be removed from the Restricted Players List.

- d. **Modified Pitch.** Men's 9 Man Modified Pitch teams will be determined by a restricted pitchers list. The restricted modified pitch pitchers list will be available on the USA Softball website and this list will be updated, modified and revised on a regular and continuous basis but will be finalized by August 1 each year for the current year's National Championship Finals. Pitchers listed on this list are ineligible to pitch in the 10 Man Modified championship play tournaments but may participate in another position. Any appeals regarding this list can be made through the National Office to the modified pitch sub-committee.

- e. **Slow Pitch.**

- i. All Men's Slow Pitch players and or teams are eligible to participate in the Men's Class A or Men's Class B National Championships and retain his/her eligibility for his/her original classification in championship play.
- ii. A restricted slow pitch player list will be compiled by a USA Softball committee representing slow pitch. The restricted slow pitch players list will be available on the USA Softball website and this list will be updated, modified and/or revised on a regular and continuous basis but will be finalized by August 1 each year for the current year's National Championship Finals. Players on the USA Softball restricted slow pitch player's list may only play Class A, Class AA and Super. Any team that participates in the Men's Class A may not have more than two players from the USA Softball restricted slow pitch player list. Any team that participates in the Men's Class AA may not have more than five players from the USA Softball restricted slow pitch player list. Any appeals regarding this list can be made through the National Office to the slow pitch sub-committee.
- iii. All Women's Slow Pitch players and/or teams are eligible to participate in the Women's Class Open National Championship and retain his/her eligibility for his/her original classification in championship play.
- iv. All Slow Pitch players and teams need to review **Article 307** for classification restrictions prior to completing a team roster.

03. Junior Olympic

- a. Any Junior Olympic team personnel participating in championship play must have at least one current ACE certified coach (current season) on the field/dugout during championship play.
- b. For all Junior Olympic team activities, including championship play and non-championship play, all adults (on the field/dugout) must have a background check and be Safe Sport certified for the current season.
- c. For all Junior Olympic team activities, including championship play and non-championship play, all Junior Olympic team personnel assisting on the field/dugout must visually or electronically display a current USA Softball background check card.

D. Player Eligibility.

- 01. **Player Participation.** A player may participate in any one local association during the current year.

EXCEPTIONS:

- a. In 9 Man Modified and 10 Man Modified Pitch, teams shall be made up of players from his/her respective region or the associations bordering state(s). A rostered player can play in championship play if they come from within his/her respective region or bordering state(s).
- b. In the 50, 55, 60 and 65 seniors' divisions of slow pitch teams shall be made up of players from the team's home state plus adjoining states. The home state is defined as the state where the most players on the roster reside.
- c. Seniors Major Plus teams can get their players anywhere in the East Section for the East National or the West Section for the West National.
- d. Foreign players may not participate in any Boy's Fast Pitch.

02. **Rostered Player.**

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

EXCEPTIONS:

- i. **Armed Forces.** Members of the Armed Forces team are exempt from this rule if competing with their individual service (branch) team or the Armed Forces team.
 - ii. **All Men's Fast Pitch.**
 - iii. **Men's Super, Class AA, Class A and Class B Slow Pitch.**
 - iv. **Player Release.** See definition in **Article 103.**
 - v. **Women's Class Open Slow Pitch.**
- b. On adult or Junior Olympic rosters, a player may participate in more than one adult or Junior Olympic division of play, but that player is limited to only one classification within a division of play.

NOTE: The Military/First Responders roster and playing guidelines will be established by the USA Softball CEO.

- c. **Adult Player Classification.** Individual adult players may not play more than one classification below the classification level of his/her most recent team.
- d. **Junior Olympic Classification.** Once a player participates in an intercollegiate softball program for a university, college, or junior/community college, the player is ineligible to play below the Class A level.

CLARIFICATION: A redshirted player is considered to be a participant in an intercollegiate softball program.

03. **Electing to Participate.** Once electing to participate in championship play on a team registered in a local association, the player may not play in the same division in any other local association during the current year.

EXCEPTION: In the Seniors Divisions, a player may play in the same division in another local association, but not in the same classification.

EXCEPTION: Player Release. See definition in **Article 103.**

04. **Player Identification.**

- a. **Providing Proper Identification.**
 - i. A player must produce proper identification (which shall include a current photograph of the player and the player's signature) or the player shall be declared ineligible and the team may be subject to suspension. For the purpose of this section, driver's licenses or comparable identification is acceptable.
 - ii. In all Championship Play events, every player must sign in prior to playing. This name needs to match what is on the driver's license or comparable identification. Failure to do so will result in disqualification from the

tournament, unless the player has not played, in this case they will be allowed to sign in. A player must provide proper identification (which shall include a current photograph of the player and the player's signature) to the tournament director prior to participating in the competition. The Tournament Director shall follow the sign in procedures developed and provided by the National Office. The tournament director shall compare the identification with the name and signature appearing on the team's championship roster.

- b. **Local Association Photo/Identification Card.** If a photo ID card for a player is issued by the local association Commissioner and/or his/her designated Deputy, it will satisfy the required proof of age during USA Softball championship play. The card will include the date of birth and signature of the player and any other information required by the current USA Softball Procedural Code. The card will also include the signature (or facsimile) of the local USA Softball Commissioner and/or his/her designated Deputy to certify the date of birth and that proof of age is on file with the local USA Softball office. Other information on the card may include the player's USA Softball registration number and information on the USA Softball insurance coverage. A photo ID card with the above requirements and issued by the local association will satisfy the requirements of paragraph a, b and c.
- c. **Junior Olympic Birth Verification.** For each member of a Junior Olympic team, one of the following forms of birth verification or proof of age must be attached to the team's roster/affidavit form:

Birth/Hospital Certificate	Baptismal Certificate	Driver's License
Photo ID Card issued by USAS Commissioner	Valid Passport	Other*

*Other proof of identification (i.e. school records) approved by a Local USA Softball Commissioner and/or his/her designated deputy may be accepted on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of a player whose name has changed from that which appears on his/her identification by reason of adoption or a court approved name change, a copy of the court order or decree approving such adoption or change of name shall also be attached to the roster/affidavit form. Photocopies of any of the above are acceptable.

- 05. **Proof of Age.** A player must provide proof of age in Junior Olympic, adult 18-Over, masters and seniors divisions.
 - a. **Junior Olympic Age Qualifications.** A player's age as of August 31 determines the age in which the player is eligible to play the following year.
 - i. **8-Under Age Classification.** A player whose 9th birthday is prior to September 1, 2025, is INELIGIBLE.
 - ii. **10-Under Age Classification.** A player whose 11th birthday is prior to September 1, 2025, is INELIGIBLE.
 - iii. **12-Under Age Classification.** A player whose 13th birthday is prior to September 1, 2025, is INELIGIBLE.

- iv. **14-Under Age Classification.** A player whose 15th birthday is prior to September 1, **2025**, is INELIGIBLE.
- v. **16-Under Age Classification.** A player whose 17th birthday is prior to September 1, **2025**, is INELIGIBLE.
- vi. **18-Under Age Classification.** A player whose 19th birthday is prior to September 1, **2025**, is INELIGIBLE.
- vii. Players of younger age classification may play in older age classifications, but an older age classification player may not play in the younger age classification.

For the 2026 Junior Olympic Playing Season, use the chart below to determine Junior Olympic Age Qualifications by matching the month (top line) and box with year of birth. The player's age and division is indicated on the right. **The items in red are shown in red because they are new for the 2026 playing season.**

SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	AGE	DIV.
2017	2017	2017	2017	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	7	8U
2016	2016	2016	2016	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	8	8U
2015	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	9	10U
2014	2014	2014	2014	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	10	10U
2013	2013	2013	2013	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	11	12U
2012	2012	2012	2012	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	12	12U
2011	2011	2011	2011	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	13	14U
2010	2010	2010	2010	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	14	14U
2009	2009	2009	2009	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	15	16U
2008	2008	2008	2008	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	16	16U
2007	2007	2007	2007	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	17	18U
2006	2006	2006	2006	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	18	18U

- b. **Masters and Seniors Age Qualifications.** Cutoff date is December 31. A player whose birthday (35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, and 75) is on or before December 31 of the current year is eligible.

Note: Senior ages 70-over and 75-over may have up to three players who are one year below the minimum age requirement.

- c. **Men's Masters 40-over Fast Pitch.** Teams may have up to three players who are three years below the minimum age requirement.

- d. **Men's Masters 50-over Fast Pitch.** Teams may have up to three players who are three years below the minimum age requirement. These players are ineligible to pitch.
- e. **Men's Seniors 60-over Fast Pitch.** Teams may have up to three players who are three years below the minimum age requirement. These players are ineligible to pitch.
- E. **Protest of Eligibility.** Protest of player eligibility can be made or appealed at any time. Eligibility protests cannot be waived by local notice.
- F. **Adult Slow Pitch Only.** The local association Commissioner or designee signing the roster must verify the players ranking in the USA Softball Slow Pitch Player database and write the players classification next to them on the roster. If said person signing the roster has knowledge or can verify that a player's classification in another National Association, they must also note that ranking as well. Refer to **Article 307 (H)(01) NOTE.**

Article 302 ROSTERS. A team's roster becomes official when a commissioner or designee signs it for championship play. Each team is permitted pick up players according to **Article 303.**

- A. **Rosters.** Male rosters shall include only male players and female rosters shall include only female players. Co-ed rosters shall include both male and female players.
- B. **Number of Players.** A championship roster can only have a maximum of 20 players, including pickup players. A manager or coach shall not count as a player unless listed as one. Player(s) names cannot be removed or replaced once the player on the roster has participated in championship play.

EXCEPTION: Player Release. See definition in **Article 103.**

- C. **Roster Change Deadline.** The roster change deadline for championship play is 24 hours prior to the start of championship tournament play.

NOTE: Local associations may establish an earlier deadline for classification purposes.

- D. **Roster Form.** Roster forms shall be provided by the National Office and are the only official rosters for championship play.
- E. **Roster Procedure.** The roster/affidavit form must be signed by the player, his/her guardian (if necessary) and the manager. Parent's signatures are not required for players 18 years of age and over. The roster must be signed by the local association commissioner or his/her designee.
- F. **Roster Eligibility.** Receipt and acceptance of an official USA Softball affidavit roster shall not be considered as a determination of the eligibility of a player or team. Eligibility of players or teams shall be governed as otherwise provided in the Procedural Code.

Article 303 PICK-UP PLAYERS.

- A. **General Rule.** All teams are permitted to pick-up three players as follows:
 - 01. The team adding pick-up players must select eligible roster members from USA Softball registered teams.

EXCEPTION: Adult Slow Pitch, Senior Slow Pitch and Junior Olympic Fast Pitch.

02. Pick-up players must have played for a USA Softball registered team during the current season.

EXCEPTION: Senior Slow Pitch and Junior Olympic Fast Pitch.

03. **(JO ONLY)** Pick-up players must be individually registered prior to the start of a National Championship Final.
04. Pick-up players must be selected only from USA Softball registered teams no longer eligible for championship play.

EXCEPTION: A player that has been released from a team's championship roster prior in accordance with the Player Release form.

05. Pick-up players must be from the team's same or lower classification **as the tournament.** (Adult Slow Pitch Only) **This requirement applies to both a Player's current team and, if applicable, individual classification.**

EXCEPTION: A Player one classification higher than the tournament—based on current team and individual classifications—may only be a pickup player for a team that has not reached their maximum number of higher classified players eligible to play at the tournament's classification based upon the Slow Pitch Classification Restrictions (Article 307, Paragraph H.01, Page 29). All of a team's rostered and pickup players must be considered with regard to that restriction.

CLARIFICATION: In Junior Olympic play there are two types of classification, one type of classification is Gold, Class A and Class B; the other type of classification is age classification, 18-Under, 16-Under, 14-Under, 12-Under and 10-Under. Therefore, as an example, a player who has competed on a Junior Olympic Girls' Fast Pitch 16-Under team is an eligible pick-up player for any team below the 16-Under age classification if she meets that age classification criteria. Another example, once a player participates on a Class A team, they are not eligible to participate in Class B even if moving up in the age classification.

CLARIFICATION: A player who has competed in any Junior Olympic Girls' Fast Pitch National Championship Finals is an eligible pick-up player in a higher classification. Therefore, as an example, a player who participates in a Western Championship Final is an eligible pick-up player for any team at the USA Softball National Championship Final.

06. Players (Adult and Junior Olympics) whose teams have qualified to compete in the highest-level tournaments within a classification shall not be eligible pick-up players.

CLARIFICATION: A player who has competed in any Junior Olympic Girls' Fast Pitch National Championship Finals is not an eligible pick-up player for any other Junior Olympic Girls' National Championship Finals.

EXCEPTION: A player who has competed in the Men's 23-Under championship play is eligible to participate in other adult championship play during the same season as a pick-up player.

07. In adult divisions of play, a pick-up player may be substituted for after participation.
 08. In Junior Olympic divisions of play, a pick-up player may not be substituted for after participation.
 09. A player may play as a pick-up player with only one team other than his/her rostered USA Softball registered team within a division in a season.
 10. Teams adding pick-up players must submit a completed official USA Softball pick-up player form attached to the official roster before the team plays in the tournament.
- B. Fast Pitch, Modified Pitch, and Slow Pitch Pickup Players.** A player may be picked up at any level of championship play prior to the National Championship Final as follows:
01. If players are picked up prior to the local association championship, they must be governed by his/her local association rules.
 02. If players are picked up after his/her local association championship, the pick -up player(s) must be governed by **Article 303**.

Note: Men's Modified Pitch pick-up players may come from the teams' respective region or the associations bordering state(s).

Article 304 USA SOFTBALL DRUG CONTROL PROCEDURE AND POLICY. USA Softball will adopt and enforce the findings, procedures and penalties in accordance with the United States Anti-Doping Agency (**USADA**) and the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (**USOPC**).

Article 305 SUSPENSION AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES are governed in accordance with **Sections 15 and 16 of the USAS Bylaws**.

Article 306 DIVISIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS OF CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY DEFINED.

- A.** USA Softball recognizes the following divisions and classifications of championship play. Each local association shall establish a classification code to determine team and/or player classification for championship play in the following divisions:

<u>DIVISIONS</u>	<u>CLASSIFICATIONS</u>
01. Men's Fast Pitch	Major Open
02. Men's 23-Under Fast Pitch	
03. Women's 18-Over Fast Pitch	
04. Men's Slow Pitch	Super AA A B C D E/Rec

NOTE: The Men's Super and Class A qualifying guidelines will be established by the USA Softball CEO. The USA Softball Super National Championship date and location will be approved by the USA Softball Board of Directors.

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|---|-------------------------|
| 05. Men's 21-Under Slow Pitch | |
| 06. Men's 19-Under Slow Pitch | |
| 07. Women's Slow Pitch | Open
C
D
E/Rec |
| 08. Men's (09) Man Modified Pitch | |
| 09. Men's (10) Man Modified Pitch | |
| 10. Military/First Responders Slow Pitch | |

NOTE: The Military/First Responders playing guidelines, championship dates, and location will be established by the USA Softball CEO.

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 11. Men's 16-Inch Slow Pitch | Major
A |
| 12. Co-Ed Slow Pitch | Open
C
D
E |
| 13. Men's Masters 40-Over Fast Pitch | |
| 14. Men's Masters 50-Over Fast Pitch | |
| 15. Men's Seniors 60-Over Fast Pitch | |
| 16. Men's Masters 35-Over Slow Pitch | |
| 17. Men's Masters 40-Over Slow Pitch | |
| 18. Men's Masters 45-Over Slow Pitch | |

NOTE: The Masters Slow Pitch playing guidelines will be established by the USA Softball CEO.

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|---|----------------------------------|
| 19. Men's Seniors 50-Over Slow Pitch | Major Plus
Major
AAA
AA |
| 20. Men's Seniors 55-Over Slow Pitch | Major Plus
Major
AAA
AA |
| 21. Men's Seniors 60-Over Slow Pitch | Major Plus
Major
AAA
AA |
| 22. Men's Seniors 65-Over Slow Pitch | Major Plus
Major |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| | AAA |
| | AA |
| 23. Men's Seniors 70-Over Slow Pitch | Major
AAA |
| 24. Men's Seniors 75-Over Slow Pitch | Major
AAA |

NOTE: The Senior Slow Pitch playing guidelines will be established by the USA Softball CEO.

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|---|--|
| 25. Women's Masters 35-Over Slow Pitch | |
| 26. Women's Seniors 50-Over Slow Pitch | Major
AAA |
| 27. Women's Seniors 55-Over Slow Pitch | Major
AAA |
| 28. Women's Seniors 60-Over Slow Pitch | Major
AAA |
| 29. Women's Seniors 65-Over Slow Pitch | Major
AAA |
| 30. Women's Seniors 70-Over Slow Pitch | Major
AAA |
| 31. Women's Seniors 75-Over Slow Pitch | Major
AAA |
| 32. Boy's Fast Pitch | 18-Under
16-Under
14-Under
12-Under
10-Under |
| 33. Boy's Slow Pitch | 18-Under
16-Under
14-Under
12-Under
10-Under |

NOTE: The Boys Slow Pitch playing guidelines will be established by the USA Softball CEO.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 34. Girl's Fast Pitch | 8-Under
GOLD 18-Under
16-Under
Class A 18-Under
16-Under
14-Under
12-Under
10-Under |
|------------------------------|--|

Class B 18-Under
 16-Under
 14-Under
 12-Under
 10-Under
 Class C 14-Under
 12-Under
 10-Under

35. **Girl's Slow Pitch**

18-Under
 16-Under
 14-Under
 12-Under
 10-Under

- B. **Additional Classification.** Local associations may adopt additional classifications (adult and Junior Olympic). A copy of each local association classification code shall be filed with the National Office.

NOTE: Listing in any of the above divisions and/or classifications does not indicate a National Championship Final unless also listed under **Article 314**.

Article 307 CLASSIFICATIONS OF CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY.

- A. **Local Association.** The local association commissioner shall classify teams and/or players within the local association in accordance with their respective classification code. A copy of each local association classification code shall be filed with the National Office.
- B. **Team Classification.** A team, who has been classified in any division of play during the previous year, will remain in the same classification during the current season until reclassified by their respective Classification Board. However, if a team is subject to the USA Softball Mandatory Classification Rule, the new classification is effective immediately.
01. An adult team may participate in championship play in a higher classification but not below its assigned classification. Participation in a higher classification could affect the team's classification.
 02. A Junior Olympic Class B team may participate in Class A Championship Play Events. Participation in a higher classification could affect the team's classification.
 03. Teams may not participate in more than one national championship final in any division of play unless specifically covered in this Procedural Code.
 04. Men's Seniors Slow Pitch will be classified by a three-member National Seniors Classification Board to be appointed by the CEO.
- C. **Local Classification Board.** Each local association shall establish a classification board to review, upon written application, the classification of a team and/or players, and shall have the authority to change the classification if found to be not in accordance with the respective classification code.
- D. **Regional Classification Code.** The region shall have the authority to classify teams according to a classification code adopted and approved by the voting members of the

region. A copy of the regional classification code shall be submitted to the National Office.

- E. **Regional Classification Board.** The voting members of the Region, by majority vote, may revise and amend a classification code of a local association within the region to correct inequities in classification as reflected in regional tournament play. This body may also assign classification for USA Softball play to teams belonging to allied member organizations within the region.

F. **National Adult Fast Pitch Players Classification Board.**

01. **Responsibilities.** The National Fast Pitch Player Classification Board will oversee all aspects of the adult fast pitch pitcher player classification. The Board will create procedures regarding classification.

- a. The Board will consist of five people, one representative from each territory plus one at-large member, as shown: Eastern Territory, Northern Territory, Southern Territory, Western Territory, At large member to be assigned by USA Softball President.

NOTE: If a territory cannot elect a representative, then the President will fill the vacancy by appointment.

- b. Each territory representative shall name a territorial subcommittee comprised of no less than five and no more than 9 people from their territory. Local association representatives will be assigned in conjunction with the Association Commissioner.

02. **Duties.**

- a. Each territory shall create and maintain a fast pitch player classification.
- b. This board is to uphold the national pitchers list and classification strategy.
- c. This board in concert with the National Office staff will oversee and maintain a national players classification list.
- d. This board in concert with the National Office staff will communicate with the tournament directors of USA Softball National Championships to ensure all pitchers participating in USA Softball Fast Pitch events are within the established procedures.
- e. This board will also seek out further information by contacting local commissioners, player representatives, district commissioners, league directors, and tournament directors to acquire the best and most recent information on fast pitch pitchers.

03. **Rules.**

- a. Male and Female pitchers that are classified Major Fast Pitch by the local association in which they reside must remain in that classification until changed by the same local association.
- b. Any Men's Class B or C Fast Pitch pitcher who earns First Team All Tournament, MVP or outstanding pitcher awards and whose team is reclassified pursuant to **Article 307 (H)(02)** or **Article 307 (H)(03)**, Receiving these awards could affect the players classification the next playing season.
- c. Foreign Pitchers will be classified by the Men's Fast Pitch Territory and National Classification boards. Unclassified foreign pitchers will not be eligible to pitch in Men's Open.

- d. In all adult Fast Pitch, a member of a Country's Men's National Team or National player pool may not participate below the Major level.

EXCEPTION: A member of a Country's Junior Men's National Team or player pool may participate below the Major level in a National Championship Final

EXCEPTION: Non-pitching members of a Country's Men's National Team or player pool may pitch at the Open level but cannot bat or assume any other defensive position.

- e. All Men's Fast Pitch players and or teams rated below Major are eligible to participate in the Men's Major Fast Pitch National Championship and retain their eligibility for their original classification in Championship Play.
 - f. Men's Major Fast Pitch Players will be classified by a restricted fast pitch players list. The restricted fast pitch players list will be available on the USA Softball website and this list will be updated, modified and/or revised on a regular and continuous basis, but will be finalized by July 15 each year for the current year's National Championship Finals. The players on this list are ineligible to participate in the Men's Open Fast Pitch classification. Any appeals regarding this list can be made through the National Office to the Fast Pitch Classification Board.
04. **Classification Appeal.** Players classified in accordance with this article have the right to appeal their classification after participating at the higher classification. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the team's local commissioner and should include game results and reason for appeal. The local commissioner shall evaluate the information presented and forward the appeal with their recommendation to the National Adult Fast Pitch Players Board. The National Adult Fast Pitch Players Board shall review the information presented and make a determination on the appeal.

G. National Adult Slow Pitch Player Classification Board.

- 01. **Responsibilities.** The National Player Classification Board will oversee all aspects of the adult slow pitch classification. The Board will create procedures regarding classification.
 - a. The Board will consist of five people, one representative from each territory plus one at-large member, as shown: Eastern Territory, Northern Territory, Southern Territory, Western Territory, At large member to be assigned by USA Softball President.
 - b. Each territory representative shall name a territorial subcommittee comprised of no less than five and no more than 9 people from their territory. Local association representatives will be assigned in conjunction with the Association Commissioner.
- 02. **Duties.** The duty of the board is to uphold the national team and player classification strategy. The board, in concert with the National Office staff, will oversee a National Player Classification Registry. The Board, in concert with National Office staff, will communicate with tournament directors of National Championships to ensure all teams participating in USA Softball Slow Pitch events are within the procedures. The board will also seek out further information by contacting local commissioners, player representatives, district commissioners, league directors, and tournament directors to acquire the best and most recent information on teams and players. The board

will also review rosters from other associations on an annual basis and adjust player ratings or add the players to the database.

H. **Mandatory Classification.**

01. **Mandatory Slow Pitch Player Classification.** Starting January 1 each year will start a player appeal process where each player can submit an appeal to have their player rating dropped. This process ends August 1 and at that time appeals will not be accepted until January. We have taken our team procedures and based it on the USA Softball Procedural Code in which a team could have three Mandatory players from the next higher division on their roster. We consider our list equal to Mandatory classified players. With the player classification system that we have in place, it helps create a fair and level playing field for all our teams, not only at a local, but also at a national level. Below are the procedures that we use on how to classify a team. Players on the USA Softball Restricted List can only participate in the Men's A or Coed Open Programs. A player may have a + designation, this player cannot play down a class.

SUMMARY OF SLOW PITCH CLASSIFICATIONS

CLASSIFICATIONS

RESTRICTIONS

Men's Class Super

Any male player.

Men's Class AA

Five players from the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.

Men's Class A

Two players from the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.

Men's Class B

Three A classified players and no players from Class A+ or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.

Men's Class C

Four B classified players and no players from Class A, Class B+ or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.

Men's Class D

Four C classified players and no players from Class A, Class B, Class C+ or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.

Men's Class E/Rec

Four D classified players and no players from Class A, Class B, Class C, Class D+ or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.

Women's Class Open

Any female player.

Women's Class C

Four Open classified players

Women's Class D

Four C classified players and no Open classified players.

Women's Class E/Rec	Four D classified players and no players from Open or Class C.
Co-Ed Class Open	Any female player and two male players from the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.
Co-Ed Class C	Two Open classified female players and two male classified B players and no male players from Class A, or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.
Co-Ed Class D	Two open classified females players and two male B classified players, no male players from Class A, or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.
Co-Ed Class E/Rec	Two female D classified players and two male D classified players. No Open, Class C or Class D+ classified female players or male players from Class A, Class B, Class C, Class D+ or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.

NOTE: Players that have no USA Softball playing history should be handled in the following manner. If a track record of a player can be verified in another National Association that player shall be classified at that level. The higher classification level from any association will set the rating for classification of players, within a two-year time period.

02. **Mandatory Team Reclassification.** An adult team that has four or more players on a roster, including pick-up players, from a team or teams that finished in the following divisions and classifications in the same National Championship Final must participate in the next higher classification in championship play for his/her next USA Softball playing season unless they played in the highest classification. In all Adult National Championships, the table below will be used to reclassify teams to the next higher class based on teams entered in the event.

0-9 Teams	0 Teams
10-19 Teams	1 Team
20-29 Teams	2 Teams
30-39 Teams	3 Teams
40-49 Teams	4 Teams
50-69 Teams	6 Teams
70-89 Teams	8 Teams, etc.

NOTE: If a team fails to participate in Championship play the next calendar year this restriction will remain in effect until the team participates at the higher classification.

NOTE: The National Office shall forward the championship rosters for teams that are subject to the Mandatory Classification Rule, **Article 307 (H)(02)** to the respective National Championship Tournament Directors as follows:

- a. The tournament for which the team is advancing (Higher Classification).
- b. The tournament for which they participated in the previous year (Lower Classification).

EXCEPTION: Coed Class C, Coed Class D and teams must finish in the top 10% of National Championships in two consecutive years before they will be required to play in the next higher classification in USA Softball Championship Play.

EXCEPTION: Adult Fast Pitch teams that finish first in a National Championship Finals and in his/her next playing season finish first again shall be reclassified to the next higher classification.

03. **Restricted Classification Rule.**

- a. **Teams.** A team that wins two or more games in a double elimination bracket, or three or more games in a three game bracket, excluding forfeits, in a National Championship Final may not participate in a lower classification in the same division of championship play during their next USA Softball playing season unless they played in the highest classification. Those already classified as one level higher would not be affected by this change. A team that has four or more players on a roster, including pick-ups, from such a team shall be considered the same team.

EXCEPTIONS:

- i. Men's Major Fast Pitch. Any team that has not competed in the Men's Major Fast Pitch National Championship Tournament for two consecutive years shall be allowed to participate in a lower classification regardless of the number of games won at the national tournament, provided they have received permission from their Local Commissioner, to compete at a lower classification for the following season.
- ii. Men's Class A Slow Pitch

- b. **Returning Players.** A team that has a combination of four or more players on a roster, including pick-ups, from a team or teams subject to mandatory reclassification and/or restricted classification must maintain the classification as assigned by the mandatory classification rule.

EXCEPTION: Players that have successfully appealed and been granted a reclassification shall not be counted towards the four-player rule for a returning team.

- I. **Classification Appeal.** Teams and players classified in accordance with this article have the right to appeal his/her classification after participating at the higher classification. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the team's local commissioner and should include game results and reason for the appeal. The local commissioner shall evaluate the information presented and forward the appeal with their recommendation to the Chair of the Tournament Programs Committee. The Tournament Programs Committee shall review the information presented. If the appeal is granted, the team's roster and players shall be frozen for the balance of the year. If the team adds

a player to their roster, except Pick-Up Players pursuant to **Article 303**, the appeal is nullified, and the team is reclassified to at least the next higher classification.

Article 308 LEVELS OF CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY. The following are levels of championship play:

- A. **Local Association Championships.** Local Associations championship play at the state or metro championship must follow the USA Softball Procedural Code.

EXCEPTION: All adult slow pitch and Men's Fast Pitch.

EXCEPTION: Local Association rules may be enacted for run ahead rules, time limits, uniforms (except that a minimum must be shirts that are like in color and style with numbers on the back), home run rules, stealing, metal cleats and fence distances.

01. **Tournament Structure.** Local associations may conduct sub district, district or county championships for the purpose of qualifying teams for local association championships. These tournaments are open to registered member teams in accordance with the rules and regulations of the local association, provided such rules and regulations are not in conflict or inconsistent with this Procedural Code or the established policies of USA Softball.

NOTE: Local associations may not conduct championship play tournaments in locations outside of their association's boundaries without permission from that local association's commissioner.

02. **Bracket Options.** State and Metro Associations may choose to have pool play and a single elimination tournament to qualify 10-Under, 12-Under, 14-Under, 16-Under and 18-Under Class A and Class B fast pitch teams for advancing to National Championship Finals.

03. **Scheduling.** Local Associations may conduct JO qualifying tournaments for the following years championship play. Teams that participate in these tournaments must use age eligible players for the year the championship play will be played and must meet the returning team requirement to maintain their berth.

04. **Berth Distribution.** Local association berths may be open to all USA Softball registered teams from any local association if the host State/Metro commissioner allows. Teams from outside the local association must have a national championship entry form and Championship roster signed by his/her local State/Metro commissioner or designee in order to participate.

- B. **National Qualifiers.** The association shall conduct national qualifiers in the following divisions of championship play.

01. Adult Slow Pitch National Qualifiers may be held in Adult Slow Pitch. The association hosting the tournament must use their local association berths. Teams that accept the berths must abide by the rules set forth by their local association to advance in championship play.

EXCEPTION: Men's Class C will have 64 allocated berths.

- C. **Regional Championships.** Regional Championships may be held in any division and classification.
- D. **GOLD Qualifying Tournaments.** GOLD Qualifying Tournaments (NGQT) will be held in accordance with **Article 313.**
- E. **National Championships Finals.** National Championship Finals will be held in accordance with **Article 314.**

Article 309 DATES OF CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY. Regional Tournaments, National Qualifiers, and Gold Qualifiers must be scheduled to start no earlier than Friday and complete no later than Sunday.

- A. **Local Association Tournaments.** The dates for Junior Olympic Class A Championships must be scheduled to be completed at least twelve days prior to the start of the first game of their prospective Junior Olympic National Championship final.
- B. **Regional Tournaments.** The dates for regional tournaments shall be established by the commissioners within the respective region. Junior Olympic Gold and Class A Regional Tournaments must be scheduled to be completed a minimum of twelve days prior to the start of the first game in the Junior Olympic Gold Championship Final.

EXCEPTION: Gold Regional Qualifiers may be held during the week if agreed upon by the local associations in the region.

- C. **National Championship Finals.** The CEO has the authority to change dates of National Championship Finals for extenuating circumstances.
01. **Adult Slow Pitch.** All adult slow pitch National Championship Finals shall be scheduled over the Labor Day weekend, commencing no earlier than Friday at 6:00 p.m. and concluding no later than Labor Day, with the following exceptions:
- a. **Men's Class A and Women's Open Slow Pitch.** These National Championship Finals shall have dates established and approved by the CEO.
 - b. **Men's Class B Slow Pitch.** This National Championship Finals shall have dates established and approved by the CEO.
 - c. **Men's Class C Slow Pitch.** These National Championship Finals shall be scheduled on Labor Day weekend and shall commence no earlier than Thursday at 6:00 p.m. and concluding no later than Monday.
 - d. **Men's Class D and E/Rec Slow Pitch.** These National Championship Finals can be scheduled on the weekend prior to Labor Day or on Labor Day weekend. If scheduled on the weekend prior to Labor Day the tournament shall commence no earlier than Thursday at 6:00 p.m. and conclude no later than Sunday. If scheduled on Labor Day the tournament shall commence no earlier than Thursday at 6:00 p.m. and concluding no later than Monday.
 - e. **Men's 35-Over Masters Slow Pitch.** This National Championship Final shall have dates established and approved by the CEO.
 - f. **Men's 40-Over Slow Pitch.** This National Championship Final shall have dates established and approved by the CEO.
 - g. **Men's 45-Over Slow Pitch.** This National Championship Final shall have dates established and approved by the CEO.
 - h. **Men's Seniors Slow Pitch.** These National Championship Finals shall be have dates established and approved by the CEO.

- i. **Women's Class C and D Slow Pitch.** These National Championship Finals can be scheduled on the weekend prior to Labor Day or on Labor Day weekend. If scheduled on the weekend prior to Labor Day the tournament shall commence no earlier than Thursday at 6:00 p.m. and conclude no later than Sunday. If scheduled on Labor Day the tournament shall commence no earlier than Thursday at 6:00 p.m. and concluding no later than Monday.
 - j. **Women's 35-Over Slow Pitch.** This National Championship Final shall have dates established and approved by the CEO.
 - k. **Open Co-ed.** This National Championship Final shall have dates established and approved by the CEO.
 - l. **Class C, Class D and Class E Co-ed.** This National Championship Final shall have dates established and approved by the CEO.
02. **Adult Fast Pitch.** All adult fast pitch National Championship Finals shall be scheduled as follows:
- a. **Men's Major Fast Pitch.** This National Championship Final shall be scheduled on the weekend that includes the last Saturday in July. The tournament may not begin prior to 4:00 p.m. on Thursday and concluding no later than Sunday. If there are 13 or more teams entered into the Championship, the bracket shall reflect a four-day schedule.
 - b. **Men's Open Fast Pitch.** This National Championship Final shall be scheduled no earlier than the weekend that includes the second Saturday in July. The tournament shall commence no earlier than 6:00 p.m. Thursday and concluding no later than Sunday.
 - c. **Men's 23-Under Fast Pitch.** This National Championship Final shall be scheduled at the same time and location as the Boy's 18-Under Fast Pitch National Championship Finals.
 - d. **Men's Masters 40-Over Fast Pitch.** This National Championship Final shall be scheduled on the weekend that includes the third weekend in July commencing no earlier than 6:00 p.m. Wednesday and concluding no later than Sunday.
 - e. **Men's Masters 50-Over Fast Pitch.** This National Championship Final shall be scheduled on the weekend which includes the last Saturday in July and shall be scheduled for a maximum of four days to conclude on Sunday.
 - f. **Men's Seniors 60-Over Fast Pitch.** This National Championship Final shall be scheduled on the weekend which includes the fourth Saturday in September, commencing no earlier than Friday at 9:00 a.m. and concluding no later than Sunday.
03. **Modified Pitch.** These National Championship Finals shall be scheduled on Labor Day Weekend, commencing no earlier than Friday at 6:00 p.m. and concluding no later than Labor Day.
04. **Junior Olympic National Championship Finals.** All Junior Olympic National Championship Finals shall be scheduled as follows:
- a. **Boy's Slow Pitch (all ages).** These National Championship finals shall be scheduled and approved by the CEO.
 - b. **Girls' Slow Pitch (all ages).** These National Championship Finals shall be scheduled and completed on the weekend that includes the last Saturday in July. This championship is scheduled for a maximum of four days.

- c. **Girls' USA Softball Class A and B Fast Pitch East/West National Championships (all ages).** These National Championship Finals must be scheduled for any weekend of June or no later than the first weekend of August. Opening ceremonies may be held on that Monday. These championships are scheduled for a maximum of six (6) days.
- d. **Girls' USA Softball Gold 16-Under and 18-Under Fast Pitch.** These National Championship Finals shall be scheduled and approved by the CEO.
- e. **Boy's Fast Pitch.** These National Championship Finals shall be scheduled as per approval of the Boy's and Men's Fast Pitch Committee.

Article 310 GENERAL REGULATIONS OF CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY. All championship play must be conducted in accordance with this Procedural Code and the playing rules as adopted by USA Softball. In case of a conflict between the USA Softball Bylaws, Procedural Code, and playing rules, the USA Softball Bylaws shall take precedence.

- A. **Assessment Fees.** Each team participating in USA Softball Championship play, not including state/metro championships shall be assessed a USA Softball fee. For further information (See **Article 605 (D) Tournament Assessment Fees and Summary of Tournament Assessment Fees**).
- B. **Barrel Compression Testing Machine.** A USA Softball approved barrel compression testing machine shall be used at all National Championship Finals. The barrel compression testing shall be coordinated by the Tournament Director and shall be conducted under the direction of the umpire staff or their designees.

EXCEPTION: Men's 16-Inch and Senior Slow Pitch National Championship Finals.

- C. **Continuation of Game.** In the event of rain or any cause that interrupts a game, the game must be resumed at the exact point where it was stopped.
- D. **Entry Deadlines.** An official team entry form and proper entry fee must be submitted to the tournament director of all National Championship Finals seven days prior to commencement of the tournament.

EXCEPTION: The Men's Major Fast Pitch, Men's Open Fast Pitch, Men's Masters 40-Over Fast Pitch, Men's Masters 50-Over Fast Pitch and Men's Seniors 60-Over Fast Pitch.

- E. **Junior Olympic General Regulations.** USA Softball has developed the following policy regarding Junior Olympic tournament play as follows:
 - 01. **Insurance.** The host of all levels of Championship Play shall be required to have Tournament Insurance that meets or exceeds the limits set by the USA Softball Board of Directors and that covers all participants. The current limits and requirements are to be listed in the USA Softball bid packet and be available online. Team Insurance will not be a requirement to play in Championship Play.
 - 02. **Use of Tobacco Products.** The use of any tobacco products is prohibited at all Junior Olympic Tournaments.
 - 03. **Cash Award Prizes.** No Junior Olympic player may participate in any tournament in which cash prizes are awarded to the individual players.

- F. **National Championship Finals Entry Fee.** Each team participating in a National Championship Final shall be assessed a **\$100.00** fee (**\$25.00** for Slow Pitch). The assessment shall be included in the tournament entry fee (See **Article 603 (A), Fast Pitch, Modified Pitch and Slow Pitch Bids**).
- G. **Official Order of Finish.** The following procedures will be used in determining the official order of finish.

NOTE: When breaking ties with more than two teams within the same position in the bracket, once you pass a step when following the order of finish code procedures, you do not return to those passed steps until changing to a different bracket position.

01. **Completed Tournament.** The tournament director shall determine the official order of finish based upon the following:
- a. Top four teams based upon their actual finish.
 - b. Remaining teams listed by descending order of finish according to their bracket position when eliminated (e.g. fifth place shall show two teams tied for that position, the next two teams tied for seventh, the next four teams tied for ninth, etc.).
 - c. Tied teams shall be determined by:
 - i. Head to head competition.
 - ii. The team that advanced the farthest in the winner's bracket.
 - iii. Won-loss records.
 - iv. The teams shall be ranked according to the fewest runs allowed per game played.
 - v. If a tie still exists, the teams shall be ranked according to the most runs scored per game played.
 - vi. If a tie still exists, by a coin toss.

EXCEPTION: If there are only two teams remaining and each has one loss, the championship game must be played, or the teams shall be declared co-champions.

02. **Incomplete Tournament.** In the event a national qualifier, regional, territorial qualifier or national championship final tournament cannot be completed within the scheduled time frame the following procedures shall be used to break ties among teams in the same spot in the bracket.
- a. Head to head competition.
 - b. The team that advanced the farthest in the winner's bracket.
 - c. Won-loss records, except among undefeated teams.
 - d. If only two teams are tied for a position and have played each other, the winner of that game.

EXCEPTION: If there are only two teams remaining and each team has one loss, the championship must be played, or the teams shall be declared co-champions. In the case of the USA Softball Eastern/Northern/Southern/Western National Championship Finals, Co-Champions will not be declared. If this occurs, the tiebreaker in **Article 310 (G)(02)(e, f and g)** followed in order will be used to determine the team advancing to the USA National Championship Series.

- e. The teams shall be ranked according to the fewest runs allowed per game played.
- f. If a tie still exists, the teams shall be ranked according to the most runs scored per game played.
- g. If a tie still exists, by a coin toss.

NOTE: Only bracket play games should be used in determining the official order of finish for National Championship Finals, pool play games should not be used.

- H. **Official Tournament Entry Form.** The official tournament entry form must be signed by the local association commissioner and accompany the roster/affidavit form for national qualifier, regional, territory qualifying or national championship final tournaments.
- I. **Severe Weather Guidelines.** USA Softball has adopted severe weather guidelines that can be found on the USA Softball website at www.usasoftball.com.
- J. **Souvenir Items.** Selling souvenir items with the USA Softball emblem or logo is restricted and must be cleared in writing with the National Office.
- K. **Substitute Teams.** If for any reason a team cannot compete in the next level of championship play during the current season, the second place team or next highest eligible team in the respective tournament shall be substituted for the team.
- L. **Team Conduct.**
 - 01. **Team Manager.** Team managers must have full control of his/her players at all times including on or off the field.
 - 02. **Restricted Activity.** At no time shall any players, coaches or managers be allowed to drink alcoholic beverages or smoke on the field or in the dugout. No person may knowingly possess or have under his/her control a weapon or explosive device on the playing field or in the dugout. For purposes of this subsection, a "weapon" means any firearm or any weapon of the kind usually known as slung shot, sand club, or metal knuckles, or any knife, dagger, dirk, or other similar weapon that is capable of causing death or bodily injury and is commonly used with the intent to cause death or bodily injury, but the definition of weapon shall specifically exclude an ordinary pocket knife or any softball-related equipment.
 - 03. **Fighting.** Anytime that a player, coach or manager strikes another player, coach, manager or umpire, said player, coach or manager is to be ejected from the game and not be allowed in the dugout for the remainder of the game and/or tournament at the discretion of the Tournament Director.
 - 04. **Unsportsmanlike.** Any participant or team personnel ejected from a game will be required to sit their next game. The time frame can be extended by the Championship committee. They cannot sit in the stands, dugouts, or general locality of the next game. If they want to appeal the sitting out the next game, it may be done with the Championship Protest Committee.
 - 05. **Disputed Play.** In case of disputed play or decision, team managers or captains may consult game officials. The other players and coaches or sponsors are to be kept out of the discussion.
 - 06. **Equipment.** The National Championship UIC, Assistant UIC, or Tournament staff shall have the right to remove any and all equipment not meeting the requirements of USA Softball Playing Rule 3, including bats and helmets through testing, pregame

inspection or during the game. Removed equipment shall be marked properly with the name of the team and/or player and not returned until after the team's final game of the tournament. The equipment is to be securely stored by the tournament committee until returned to the team and/or player.

07. **Non Approved Bat.** Any person discovered using a non-approved bat shall be ejected from the game and are subject to further action by the protest committee.
08. **Altered Bat.** Any person discovered in possession of an altered bat at or near the facility or grounds of a softball competition in which such equipment is not permitted to be used shall be subject to discipline pursuant to **Sections 15 and 16 of the USAS Bylaws**. USA Softball shall have the right to take possession of a bat that is, in the sole discretion of the official, reasonably suspected to be an altered bat. In the event the suspected altered bat is tested and determined to be an altered bat, then the person shall surrender ownership of the altered bat to USA Softball; otherwise a bat of equal or greater value, or a monetary equivalent, in the sole discretion of USA Softball, shall be returned to the owner of the subject bat. In addition, a player found in possession of an altered bat and found guilty according to **Sections 15 and 16 of the USAS Bylaws** shall be suspended from USA Softball play for a minimum of five years. A team that is discovered to have within its possession or control an altered bat may be suspended from further tournament competition and USA Softball play for a period of two years.
09. **Hotel/Motel.** Any hotel or motel management report of destruction of hotel/motel property or abuse of hotel/motel guests by a team competing in championship play.
10. **Property Damage.** Any property damage reported by officials of the hosting facility in championship play.
11. **Team Conduct Violation Penalty.** Any team or individual violating the above shall be subject to the suspension procedure in **Sections 15 and 16 of the USAS Bylaws**.
12. **Artificial Noisemakers.** The use of artificial noisemakers during championship play is prohibited.
- M. **Tie Breaker Rule.** A region may, by majority vote, establish procedures for a tiebreaker in qualifiers and regional tournaments. In all Junior Olympic Girls' Fast Pitch National Qualifiers and National Championship Finals; Men's Masters Fast Pitch National Championship Finals; and Men's Seniors Fast Pitch National Championship Finals the tiebreaker shall be in effect.
- N. **Time Limit Rule.** A region may, by majority vote, establish procedures for a time limit in qualifiers and regional tournaments. In all Junior Olympic Girls' Fast National Championship Finals; the time limit rule shall be in effect. When the time limit rule is in effect, time begins with the first warmup pitch. If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tie breaker rule shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.
01. In all Junior Olympic **10-Under**, 12-Under, 14-Under, 16-Under and 18-Under Class A and Class B Fast Pitch pool play and elimination play, the time limit will be one hour and **thirty minutes and/or one hour forty minutes** and finish the inning. **(This determination must be made at the time the National Championship bid packet is submitted.)** If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tie breaker shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.

EXCEPTION: The Championship game and “IF” game will be one hour and forty minutes.

02. In Junior Olympic Gold Fast Pitch pool play; the time limit will be one hour and forty minutes and finish the inning. If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tiebreaker shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.

03. In National Championship Finals (One True Nationals) pool play and elimination play; the time limit will be one hour and forty minutes and finish the inning. If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tiebreaker shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.

EXCEPTION: The Championship game and “IF” game will be 7 innings.

04. In all Junior Olympic Slow Pitch; no inning shall start after 1 hour and 10 minutes. If the game is still tied after the time limit has expired, the tiebreaker shall be in effect at the start of the next inning.

EXCEPTION: Junior Olympic Slow Pitch Boys’ 14-under, 16-under and 18-under

O. **Tournament Completion Options.** At any time during or prior to the tournament with the unanimous agreement of the Tournament Director, USA Softball Representative and the tournament Umpire-in-Chief, the following procedures may be followed to complete a tournament because of circumstances beyond the control of the tournament hosts.

01. A National Championship Finals may be extended.

02. A National Championship Finals may be completed by, but not limited to, using the following options:

- a. Drop pool play games and play elimination games only.
- b. Set a game time limit of one hour or five innings.
- c. Convert the tournament to a single elimination.

P. **Umpires.** Three umpires per game shall be used for all games at National Championship Finals in Adult Fast Pitch, Men’s Class A Slow Pitch, Men’s Class B Slow Pitch, Men’s Class C Slow Pitch, Men’s 16” Slow Pitch, Men’s Modified Pitch and Girls’ USA Softball 12-Under, 14-Under, 16-Under, 18-Under, and 16-Under Gold and 18-Under Gold Fast Pitch. All other National Championship Finals will utilize a minimum of two umpires per game. In all divisions where there are pool play games, a minimum of two umpires per game will be utilized.

EXCEPTION: In Men’s Open Fast Pitch, Men’s Master’s 50-Over Fast Pitch and Men’s Senior 60-Over Fast Pitch a minimum of two umpires per game will be used.

Article 311 CHAMPIONSHIP DRAW.

A. **Types of Championship Brackets.** There are four types of approved brackets for USA Softball championship play that are authorized for use in all regional tournaments, national qualifiers, and National Championship Finals. All game times and field assignments should be listed on the official bracket prior to the tournament draw. The different types of brackets are:

EXCEPTION: Gold Qualifying Tournaments must provide teams with a minimum of 2 games. These events may use the following formats: Single Elimination, Double Elimination or 3-game Bracket. Sites hosting Single Elimination must also include pool play games prior to the beginning of Single Elimination.

EXCEPTION: The CEO can approve an alternative bracket to be used in championship play upon request.

01. **Pool Play Bracket.** The pool play bracket is to be used prior to the seeded double elimination bracket for purpose of drawing onto the seeded bracket in the following championships:

Junior Olympic Boy's	18-Under Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Boy's	16-Under Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Boy's	14-Under Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Boy's	12-Under Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Boy's	10-Under Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	8- Under Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	10-Under Class A Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	12-Under Class A Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	14-Under Class A Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	16-Under Class A Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	18-Under Class B Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	10-Under Class B Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	12-Under Class B Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	14-Under Class B Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	16-Under Class B Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	18-Under Class B Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	10-Under Class C Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	12-Under Class C Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	14-Under Class C Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	16-Under GOLD Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	18-Under GOLD Fast Pitch

NOTE: Junior Olympic Girls' Fast Pitch Class A, Class B, 16-Under Gold and 18-Under Gold, this championship will use pool play prior to double elimination bracket and play 3 pool play games, The pool play bracket is to be used prior to the seeded double elimination bracket for the purpose of drawing into the seeded bracket.

Junior Olympic Girls'	10-Under Slow Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	12-Under Slow Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	14-Under Slow Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	16-Under Slow Pitch
Junior Olympic Girls'	18-Under Slow Pitch

NOTE: Junior Olympic Girls' Slow Pitch, if there are less than 85 teams, qualifying pool play shall be conducted; if there are 85 or more teams, there shall be no qualifying Pool play.

Men's Masters	35-Over Slow Pitch
Men's Masters	40-Over Slow Pitch
Men's Masters	45-Over Slow Pitch
Men's Seniors	Slow Pitch

NOTE: In all championships listed above, teams must participate in pool play to be eligible for the seeded double elimination bracket.

02. **Seeded Double Elimination Bracket.** The seeded double elimination bracket is to be used in all national championships where pool play games have been used to determine seeding into a double elimination bracket.
03. **Double Elimination Bracket.** This bracket will be used in all remaining tournaments that do not use the pool play, seeded double elimination or 3 game guarantee brackets. This bracket is also used to draw the Junior Olympic Girls' Gold Fast Pitch prior to pool play and the pool play bracket is determined by the double elimination draw.
04. **Three Game Guarantee Bracket.** In lieu of pool play, seeded double elimination or double elimination brackets, the respective Tournament Directors shall utilize an USA Softball official approved three game guaranteed format for the following:

Co-ed	Class C Slow Pitch
Co-ed	Class D Slow Pitch
Co-ed	Class E/Rec Slow Pitch
Men's	23-Under Fast Pitch
Men's Masters	40-Over Fast Pitch
Men's Masters	50-Over Fast Pitch
Men's Seniors	60-Over Fast Pitch
Men's	Class D Slow Pitch
Men's	Class E/Rec Slow Pitch
Women's	Class C Slow Pitch
Women's	Class D Slow Pitch
Women's Masters	35-Over Slow Pitch

05. **Two Tier Bracket.** Men's Open Fast Pitch – all teams are placed into a double elimination (Gold) bracket. After a team has a win-loss record of 0-2 or 1-2, that team is placed into a new double elimination (Silver) bracket. Both bracket winners will be awarded as National Champions
06. **Men's Major Fast Pitch.** All teams are placed in a double elimination (Gold) bracket. After a team has a win-loss record of 0-2 or 1-2, that team is placed into a new single elimination (Silver) bracket. Both bracket winners will be awarded as National Champions.

B. Bracket Draw Procedures.

01. Pool Play Bracket.

- a. **Four Team Pools.** In pools of four (4) teams, each team shall play each other team in the pool once and all games will count towards seeding.
- b. **Three Team Pools.** In pools of three (3) teams, each team shall play each other team in the pool once and their 3rd game will be scheduled with a cross-pool team. Cross-pool games will not count toward seeding. Cross-team games should be scheduled with another three (3) team pool, if possible.
- c. **Seeding from Pool Play.** Teams shall be seeded into the double elimination bracket by:
 - i. Win-Loss Record
 - ii. If a tie exists, tied teams shall be ranked according to their head-to-head record.
 - iii. If a tie still exists, tied teams shall be ranked according to the fewest runs allowed per game played
 - iv. If a tie still exists, tied teams shall be ranked according to the most runs scored per game played
 - v. If a tie still exists, there shall be a coin toss
- d. **Open Pool Positions.** Any open spot in a pool shall be considered as a forfeit in computing pool play standings.
- e. **Bracket Protection**
 - i. When qualifying pool play is used in Junior Olympic Fast Pitch, Junior Olympic Slow Pitch, and Men's Seniors Slow Pitch Championships, teams qualifying from the same local association shall be protected, where possible, from playing each other in qualifying pool play. When the number of teams entered in the tournament from a local association is greater than the number of pools, the final alignment in pool play shall be determined by the USA Softball Tournament Representative.
 - ii. When qualifying pool play is used in Junior Olympic Fast Pitch where teams qualify from the entire United States, teams qualifying from the same region shall be protected, where possible, from playing each other in qualifying pool play. When the number of teams entered in the tournament from a region is greater than the number of pools, the final alignment in pool play shall be determined by the USA Softball Representative.
- f. **Order of Draw.**
 - i. In drawing championships where teams qualify from the entire United States, the region with the most teams shall draw first, the region with the second most teams shall draw second, etc. In case of ties between regions, the lowest region number shall draw first. When more than one team within a region must draw, positions to draw shall be based on alphabetical order according to the team name listed on the roster. Fill-in teams shall draw after all qualified teams from their respective region have drawn. Each fill-in team draw position shall be based on alphabetical order according to the team name listed on the roster.

NOTE: When the number of teams entered in the tournament from a region is greater than the number of sections on the bracket, then follow the procedures below and draw the championship by association.

- ii. In drawing championships where teams qualify from territories, the association with the most teams will draw first, the association with the second most teams shall draw second, etc. In case of ties between associations, the tie will be determined alphabetically. When more than one team within an association must draw, positions to draw shall be determined based on alphabetical order according to the team name listed on the roster.
- 02. **Seeded Double Elimination Bracket (Used in Championships with Pool Play)**
 - a. **Bracket Used.** The USA Softball Official Seeded Double Elimination Bracket shall be used.
 - b. **Draw Timeline.** The double elimination bracket draw shall be done at the completion of the team's pool play games, or after all the teams complete pool play as determined by the USA Softball Representative, except for Junior Olympic 16-Under Gold and 18-Under Gold National Championship Finals, with each team drawing their position onto the double elimination seeded bracket.
 - c. **Draw Procedures.**
 - i. Teams will represent the Region where they are registered.
 - ii. Teams in the same qualifying pool who have played each other shall be protected from playing each other in the first round of the double elimination bracket, where possible.
 - iii. In Seniors Division National Championship Finals, teams shall draw for their position in qualifying pool play and shall be placed onto the official seeded double elimination bracket based on the results of the qualifying pool play.
- 03. **Double Elimination Bracket (Used in Championships without Pool Play.)**
 - a. **Draw Procedures:**
 - i. In National Championship Finals where no teams have qualified through regional tournament play, the local association with the most teams shall draw first, the local association with the second most teams shall draw second, etc.
 - ii. Any team qualifying for a National Championship Final from a national qualifier shall draw from the region in which they qualified.
 - b. **Bracket Protection.** The USA Softball Official Double Elimination Bracket shall be used. Teams qualifying from the same region shall be protected, where possible, from playing each other in the first two rounds of the winner's bracket. When the number of teams entered in the tournament from a region is greater than the number of sections on the bracket, the final alignment shall be determined by the USA Softball Tournament Representative. Teams will represent the Region where they are registered.
 - c. **Territorial Tournaments.** The association with the most teams will draw first, the association with the second most teams shall draw second, etc.. In case of ties between associations, the tie will be determined alphabetically. When more than one team within an association must draw, positions to draw shall be determined based on alphabetical order according to the team name listed on the roster.
 - d. **Seeding (Adults) Previous Year's Finish and Host Teams.**
 - i. **Seeded Teams.** Only teams that shall be seeded are the previous year's defending champions, second place teams and the current year's host teams.

EXCEPTION: The Men's Class A Slow Pitch National Championship teams will be seeded by the Super Series events with the assistance of the National Player Classification Board.

EXCEPTION: The Men's Modified Pitch and the Men's Major Fast Pitch National Championship will be seeded by the USA Softball CEO.

- ii. **Multiple Seeds and Host(s) Teams.** In all classes, the defending champion, second place and host teams shall draw for opposite brackets and shall play the first day and the first round of the tournament with times being assigned by the tournament committee for the best gate.

04. Three Game Guarantee Bracket.

- a. **Bracket Protection.** The USA Softball Official three Game Guarantee Bracket shall be used. Teams qualifying from the same region shall be protected, where possible, from playing each other in the first two rounds of the winner's bracket. When the number of teams entered in the tournament from a region is greater than the number of sections on the bracket, the final alignment shall be determined by the USA Softball Tournament Representative.

NOTE: Teams will represent the Region where they are registered.

- b. **Territorial Tournaments.** The association with the most teams will draw first, the association with the second most teams shall draw second, etc. In case of ties between associations, the tie will be determined alphabetically. When more than one team within an association must draw, positions to draw shall be determined based on alphabetical order according to the team name listed on the roster.
- c. **Seeding (Adults) Previous Year's Finish and Host Teams.**
 - i. **Seeded Teams.** Only teams that shall be seeded are the previous year's defending champions, second place teams and the current year's host teams.
 - ii. **Multiple Seeds and Host(s) Teams.** In all classes, the defending champion, second place and host teams shall draw for opposite brackets and shall play the first day and the first round of the tournament with times being assigned by the tournament committee for the best gate.

05. Two Tier Bracket for Men's Open Fast Pitch.

- a. **Bracket Protection.** The USA Softball Official Double Elimination Bracket for both GOLD and SILVER shall be used. Teams qualifying from the same region shall be protected, where possible, from playing each other in the first two rounds of the winner's bracket. When the number of teams entered in the tournament from a region is greater than the number of sections on the bracket, the final alignment shall be determined by the USA Softball Tournament Representative.

NOTE: Teams will represent the Region where they are registered.

- b. **Territorial Tournaments.** The association with the most teams will draw first, the association with the second most teams shall draw second, etc. In case of ties between associations, the tie will be determined alphabetically. When more

than one team within an association must draw, positions to draw shall be determined based on alphabetical order according to the team name listed on the roster.

c. **Seeding (Adults) Previous Year's Finish and Host Teams.**

- i. **Seeded Teams.** Only teams that shall be seeded are the previous year's defending champions, second place teams in both the GOLD and SILVER brackets and the current year's host teams.
- ii. **Multiple Seeds and Host(s) Teams.** In all classes, the defending champion, second place and host teams shall draw for opposite brackets and shall play the first day and the first round of the tournament with times being assigned by the tournament committee for the best gate.

C. **National Championship Final Draw Timelines.** Each team properly entered in a National Championship Final must be notified of the time and location of the draw. The draw can be held up to seven days prior to the start of the tournament so teams can be notified of their start time. Teams from local associations, where possible, shall be protected from playing each other for the first two rounds.

01. The seeded double elimination bracket draw shall be done at the completion of the team's pool play games.
02. The following championships may be drawn not more than twenty days prior to the start of the tournament:

Men's Major Fast Pitch
Men's Open Fast Pitch
Men's Masters 40-Over Fast Pitch
Men's Masters 50-Over Fast Pitch
Men's Seniors 60-Over Fast Pitch
Men's 9 Man Modified
Men's 10 Man Modified

Article 312 REGIONAL TOURNAMENTS.

- A. **Assessment Fee.** An assessment fee of **\$15.00** per team shall be paid to USA Softball.
- B. **Awarded.** Regional tournament bids shall be awarded by a majority vote of the National council members, local Junior Olympic Commissioners, local player representatives, and local umpires-in chief of the respective region.
- C. **Bids.**
 01. Regional bids are to be coordinated through the regional director.
 02. In the event that no satisfactory bid is received for a regional tournament, the regional director shall award the regional tournament to the local association who will agree to conduct it.
- D. **Entry Fee.** An entry fee may be charged in regional tournaments.
- E. **Regional Draw.** Regional tournament draws may be drawn by regional commissioners at designated meetings or may be drawn in accordance with National Championship Final draws under **Article 311 (A) (03)**. Regional commissioners with simple majority vote have option on which procedure to adopt.
- F. **Umpire Assignments.**
 01. All regional tournaments require a minimum of two umpires per game.

- 02. Assignment of umpires to regional championships is the responsibility of the host commissioner. It is recommended the host commissioner invite umpires from outside the host association.
- 03. During regional tournament play, an umpire from an association may not work (when possible) behind the plate when a team from his/her association is playing, and it is suggested that they not work the bases.
- G. **Unused Berths.** In the event that Regions are unable to fill regional qualifier berths, the berths will be redistributed within their respective territory.

Article 313 USA SOFTBALL GOLD QUALIFYING TOURNAMENTS. USA Softball shall conduct two Gold Qualifying Tournaments and may hold up to four in each territory.

A. **Eligible Teams.**

- 01. **Registrations.** All USA Softball registered Girls' 16-Under Gold and 18-Under Gold Fast Pitch Teams within their respective age groups may participate in any Gold National Qualifier.
- 02. **Previously Qualified Teams** for the National Championship Finals are eligible to compete in any Gold Qualifier.

B. **Assessment Fees.** A **\$15.00** per team assessment fee to be paid to USA Softball.

C. **Site.** The site of these tournaments shall be determined by a vote of the council members within their respective Regions.

D. **Region Administrator.** The Regional VP will appoint a Gold Administrator for their respective Region. This individual, along with the Regional VP, is responsible for ensuring all Gold Qualifier information is posted on the TournamentUSASoftball.com website & for communicating the dates/sites of their events to the National Office.

E. **Notification.** All Gold Qualifiers must be posted on the TournamentUSASoftball.com site by January 10 each year. Associations who have not posted their events by January 10 may lose berths allocated to their Region, and the berths will be redistributed.

F. **GOLD Qualifying Tournament Procedures.**

01. **GOLD Qualifying Tournaments.**

- a. Qualifiers within a region will be based on mutual agreement from the associations within the region. Only associations within the region that have Gold teams will be allowed to host a Qualifier. If multiple sites are selected to host a qualifier within a region, those events cannot be held on the same weekend. Gold Qualifiers may be held during the week if agreed upon by the association JO Commissioners within the Region.
- b. If no agreement can be reached, the association with the most Gold participation will set their date first followed by the association with the next highest participation.
- c. Qualifiers may be held for the following year at any time after the conclusion of the current year's National Championship, with agreement from their respective Region.

02. **Sites/Number of Teams.** Any association hosting Gold Qualifying Tournaments must do so at sites that can accommodate all Gold teams who have entered prior to the tournament entry deadline.

03. **Tournament Bracket.** Gold Qualifying Tournaments must provide teams with a minimum of 2 games. These events may use the following formats: Single

Elimination, Double Elimination, or 3-game Bracket. Sites hosting Single Elimination must include pool play games prior to the beginning of Single Elimination.

04. **Tournament Entry Procedures.** Sites may accept entries at any time after the event is listed on the USA Softball tournament website. Any teams wishing to enter must submit the following to the respective tournament directors the following.
 - a. Approved – USA Softball Official Tournament Entry Form
 - b. Approved – USA Softball Championship Roster
 - c. Tournament Entry fee. Receipt of the entry fee and roster does not guarantee a team a spot in the tournament.
05. **USA Softball Website Posting.**
 - a. Tournament Directors must follow Procedural Code **Article 405(D)** with regard to posting and using www.tournamentUSAsoftball.com
 - b. Tournament Directors must submit, to the National Office, an official order of finish and tournament bracket within 24 hours after the conclusion of the tournament.
 - c. Tournament Directors will scan/email the original rosters and official tournament entry forms (completed) to the National Office and the host director for the National Tournament.
 - d. Failure to submit paperwork on time will result in assessment fees to be raised from **\$15** per team to **\$50** per team to be paid to USA Softball.
06. **Master List of Qualified Teams.** The National Office will maintain a master list of all Gold teams who have qualified and accepted berth(s) for the National Championship Finals. Maintaining this list will require each Tournament Director to submit on Monday following the event they have hosted, a list of teams that qualified at the event they hosted. Inclusive in the report will be the following: Team Name, as it appears on their USA Softball Official Tournament Entry Form, Manager's Name including Street Address, City, State, Zip Code and Telephone Numbers.
07. **Notification of Unfilled Berths.** Tournament Directors must advise the Regional VP and Regional Gold Program Administrator immediately if any Gold berth goes unclaimed from the event they hosted. In the event regional berths are not awarded, the following process will be used:
 - a. Unused berths will be added to the next remaining qualifier scheduled within their respective region. Unused berths will continue to be passed down until all remaining qualifiers within a region have been held.
 - b. In the event all qualifiers within a region have concluded and unfilled berths remain, the unallocated berths will be returned to the National Office for distribution to other regions.
08. **Entry Fees.** Tournament Directors are asked to review the tournament fees in light of the double elimination or three game bracket format and adjust accordingly.
09. **Awarding of Berths.** Weather permitting; teams must participate in order to receive a berth.
 - a. If the tournament has fewer entries than the number of berths, then the number of berths will be reduced for that tournament. The number of berths shall always be at least one less than the number of teams entered.
 - b. Berths shall be based on the number allowed by the USA Softball Procedural Code for each Region and by the number of teams participating.

- c. Regions will retain the option to offer less berths but cannot offer more than allowed by the USA Softball Procedural Code without permission from the National Office.
- d. Unused berths will go back to the National Office for distribution to other associations.

Article 314 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS. The following teams are eligible for National Championship Final competition as follows:

A. Special Provisions.

- 01. **Armed Forces.** The Armed Forces shall have either one representative team from each of the armed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines) or only one representative team if an inter-service championship is held.
- 02. **Geographical Hardships.** Certain National Championship Final berths have been granted by the Council because of geographical hardships and are outlined in this Article.
- 03. **Hawaii.** If Hawaii does not participate in the regional, it shall have one berth in certain National Championship Finals as indicated in this Article.
- 04. **Puerto Rico.** Puerto Rico is eligible to qualify one team in each National Championship Final Tournament.
- 05. **Combined Local/Regional Berths.** A region or any local association may combine berths and conduct a joint championship where the commissioners within the respective regions determine it is in the best interest of their regions or local associations.
- 06. **Direct to National Championship Finals.** In the following Divisions and Classifications, any team playing in the local championship tournaments (if scheduled) may advance to the National Championship Final:

a. Fast Pitch

Men's	Major	Fast Pitch
Men's	Open	Fast Pitch
Men's	23-Under	Fast Pitch
Men's	Masters 40-Over	Fast Pitch
Men's	Masters 50-Over	Fast Pitch
Men's	Seniors 60-Over	Fast Pitch

b. Modified Pitch

Men's	9 Man	Modified Pitch
Men's	10 Man	Modified Pitch

c. Slow Pitch

Men's	Class A	Slow Pitch
Men's	Major 16-Inch	Slow Pitch
Men's	Class A 16-Inch	Slow Pitch

Men's	Master's 35-Over	Slow Pitch
Men's	Master's 40-Over	Slow Pitch
Men's	Master's 45-Over	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 50-Over Major	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 50-Over AAA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 50-Over AA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 55-Over Major	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 55-Over AAA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 55-Over AA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 60-Over Major	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 60-Over AAA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 60-Over AA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 65-Over Major	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 65-Over AAA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 65-Over AA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 70-Over AAA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 70-Over AA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 75-Over AAA	Slow Pitch
Men's	Seniors 75-Over AA	Slow Pitch
Women's	Open	Slow Pitch
Women's	Masters 35-Over	Slow Pitch
Co-ed	Open	Slow Pitch
Co-ed	Class C	Slow Pitch
Co-ed	Class D	Slow Pitch

d. Junior Olympic

Junior Olympic	Boy's	Fast Pitch
Junior Olympic	Boy's	Slow Pitch
Junior Olympic	Girls'	Slow Pitch

- B. **Men's Class A and Women's Open.** USA Softball will conduct one National Championship Final each for Men's Class A and Women's Open Slow Pitch. These National Championship Finals shall have dates established and approved by the CEO.
- C. **Men's Class B Slow Pitch.** USA Softball will conduct one National Championship Final. This National Championship Final shall have dates established and approved by the CEO. The top 10% finishers at the previous season's Men's Class C Slow Pitch Nationals will be awarded an unpaid berth.
- D. **Men's Class C Slow Pitch.** USA Softball will conduct one National Championship Final. The tournament will be held in Oklahoma City on Labor Day weekend.
01. **Qualifying.** Teams will qualify for this National Championship Final through National Qualifiers.
 02. **Berth Allocation.** Sixty-four teams will qualify; berths will be distributed by the Slow Pitch Tournament Committee.
 03. **Berths Awarded.** The top 10% finishers at the previous season's Men's Class D Slow Pitch Nationals will be awarded an unpaid berth.

- E. **Women's Class C Slow Pitch, Women's Class D Slow Pitch, Women's Class E/Rec Slow Pitch** will conduct a national championship within each territory at the same date and site as the Men's D National Slow Pitch Option. **Co-ed Open, Co-ed Class C, Co-ed Class D and Co-ed Class E/Rec** will conduct a national championship option within each territory at the same date and site as the Men's E National Slow Pitch option. These tournaments will be considered as one collective package when it comes to bid fees. There will be a single bid fee for the host site for each respective package.
- F. **USA Softball National Championship Finals.** USA Softball will conduct a National Championship Tournament in the following divisions and classifications: Girls 10-Under, 12-Under, 14-Under, 16-Under, & 18-Under Class A. Each Local Association will have one (1) berth. Any unused berths would go first to the Local Association's region and then to the Girls' Fastpitch National Championship Panel.
- G. **USA Softball East/West National Championship Finals.** USA Softball will conduct two National Championship Tournaments in following divisions and classifications:

Men's Senior Slow Pitch.

Men's Open Fast Pitch

Girls 10-Under, 12-Under, 14-Under, 16-Under, & 18-Under Class A

One championship will be played in each of the two sections in accordance with **Article 204, Sections.**

Qualifying. Teams will qualify for these National Championship Finals through their local associations. Local Associations shall establish a process by which teams may earn a berth into these National Championships. Local associations and regions may combine berths to qualify teams for these tournaments in accordance with **Article 314 (A)(05).** Teams may play in the tournament of their choice.

- H. **USA Softball Eastern/Southern/Northern/Western National Championship Finals.** USA Softball will conduct four National Championships in following divisions and classifications:

01. **Men's Class D Slow Pitch.** The top 10% finishers at the previous season's Men's Class E/Rec territory slow pitch nationals will be awarded an unpaid berth to Men's Class D territory slow pitch nationals.

EXCEPTION: Additional Territory National Championships may be held with approval of the council members of the affected territory.

02. **Men's Class E/Rec Slow Pitch**

EXCEPTION: Additional Territory National Championships may be held with approval of the council members of the affected territory.

One championship will be played in each of the four territories in accordance with **Article 203, Territories.**

Qualifying. Teams will qualify for these National Championship Finals through their local associations. Local Associations shall establish a process by which teams may

earn a berth into these National Championships. Local associations and regions may combine berths to qualify teams for these tournaments in accordance **with Article 314 (A)(05)**. Teams may play in the tournament of their choice.

03. **Women's Class E/Rec Slow Pitch.** One championship will be played in each of the four territories in accordance with **Article 203, Territories**.

Qualifying. Teams will qualify for these National Championship Finals through their local associations. Local Associations shall establish a process by which teams may earn a berth into these National Championships. Local associations and regions may combine berths to qualify teams for these tournaments in accordance **with Article 314 (A)(05)**. Teams may play in the tournament of their choice.

04. **Junior Olympic Slow Pitch**

- I. **Girls' Class A USA Softball Fast Pitch National Championship Finals.**

18, 16, 14, 12-Under

All teams are eligible to qualify for the USA Softball Class A Fast Pitch National Championship finals through their Local Association.

- J. **Girls' Class A USA Softball Fast Pitch Regional National Championship Finals.**

18, 16, 14, 12-Under

USA Softball shall conduct one Regional National Championship Finals in each age classification of Junior Olympic Girls' Class A Fast Pitch in each of the Regions, in accordance with **Article 202**.

NOTE: Nothing in this Procedural Code precludes the Regions from combining two or more Regional National Championship Finals.

01. **Eligible Teams.** All teams within a USA Softball Regional National Championship Finals Region that have not qualified for a USA Softball Junior Olympic Girls' Class A Fast Pitch National Championship are eligible to qualify for the USA Softball Regional National Championship Finals through their local association. Teams may play in the Regional National Championship of their choice.

NOTE: Ineligible. Any team that has qualified for a USA Softball Junior Olympic Girls' Fast Pitch National Championship Finals is not eligible to participate in a USA Softball Regional National Championship Finals.

02. **Berths.** The first and second place team in each Regional National Championship Finals shall receive a berth to the Junior Olympic Girls' USA Softball National Championship Finals in the team's current or succeeding year's age classification provided the team has five participating players from the previous year's roster on the current year's roster and physically present at the current championship tournament site prior to the start of their first game.

- K. **Girls' Class B USA Softball Fast Pitch Regional National Championship Finals.**

18, 16, 14, 12, 10-Under

USA Softball shall conduct one Regional National Championship Finals in each age classification of Junior Olympic Girls' Class B Fast Pitch in each of the following Regions, in accordance with **Article 203**.

NOTE: Nothing in this Procedural Code precludes the Regions from combining two or more Regional National Championship Finals.

01. **Eligible Teams.** All teams within a USA Softball Regional National Championship Finals Region are age eligible to qualify for their USA Softball Regional National Championship Finals through their local associations. Teams may play in the Regional National Championship of their choice.

L. **Girls' Class GOLD USA Softball Fast Pitch National Championship Finals.**
18-Under and 16-Under

The berths for each division will be allocated as follows:

Returning Teams (Champion, Runner-Up, 3rd Place) 3

NOTE: Returning teams must enter and pay their entry fee prior to February 1

National Office	5
Regional Berths – 4 per Region	40
Maximum Possible Number of Teams	48

01. Berths allocated to the National Office may be awarded to teams who have played in Gold Qualifying tournaments and/or teams who have not participated in Gold Qualifying tournaments. Teams receiving a berth from the Nationals Office must meet the necessary requirements for all teams that participate in a National Tournament. The Director of Membership Services shall be responsible for distribution of the berth allocated to the National Office.
02. Unused berths will be returned to the National Office Director of Membership Services for immediate distribution to the current year's tournaments with the largest number of Gold teams participating.
03. Berths from Gold Qualifying Tournaments must be awarded no later than the weekend which includes the 3rd Saturday in June. Extension of the deadline must be approved by the CEO and/or their designee.

M. **Girls Class C Fast Pitch Regional Championship Finals.** USA Softball shall conduct one Regional Championship Final in ages 10U, 12U and 14U of Junior Olympic Girls' Class C Fast Pitch in each of the following Regions, in accordance with **Article 202**.

01. **Eligible Teams.** All teams within a Regional Championship Finals Region are age eligible to qualify for their Regional Championship finals through their local association. Teams may play in the Championship of their choice.
02. **Format.** Each Girls' Class C Fast Pitch Regional Championship Finals shall be structured so that each team is scheduled to play a minimum of four games - two pool games and a double elimination bracket.
03. Each Regional Championship Finals shall have a pre-tournament draw/luncheon for managers and opening ceremonies for the teams.
04. **Eligible Players.** A Class C team must be comprised of players and teams that are classified by their local association at the Class C or Rec level.

N. **Girls' 8-Under Regional Championship Finals.** USA Softball shall conduct one Regional Championship Finals Tournament in 8-Under of Junior Olympic Girls' in each of the following Regions, in accordance with **Article 202**.

01. **Eligible Teams.** All teams within a Regional Championship Finals region are age eligible to qualify for their Regional Championship Finals through their local associations. Teams may play in the Championship of their choice.
02. **Format.** Each Girls' 8-Under Regional Championship Finals shall be structured so that each team is scheduled to play a minimum of four games - two games of pool play and a seeded double elimination bracket.
03. **Opening Ceremonies.** Each Regional Championship Finals shall have a pre-tournament draw/luncheon for the managers and opening ceremonies for the teams.
04. **Rules.** Each region will determine the playing rules and qualification procedures for this classification.

Article 315 NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS. National Invitational Tournaments shall be conducted as follows:

- A. **Bids.** Bids for conducting national invitational tournaments must be submitted to the National Office 60 days prior to the start of the tournament and approved by the Territory in which it's being held.
- B. **Branding.** National invitational tournaments cannot use USA Softball marks and logos before the tournament is approved by the local association USA Softball Commissioner and the USA Softball CEO.
- C. **Schedule.** National invitational tournaments cannot be scheduled within the same week where it would conflict with the Championship Play of this Association in the same classification and division of play.
- D. **Sanction Fee.** The sanction fee for national invitational tournaments is **\$200.00** and must accompany the bid. Checks are to be made payable to USA Softball.
- E. **Assessment Fee.** The bid must include a minimum **\$25.00** assessment fee per team, payable to the National Office. Any additional entry fee must be specified in the bid.
- F. **Rules and Regulations.** Although a formal contract shall not be negotiated between the tournament host and USA Softball, it is expected that all national invitational tournaments shall be conducted within the rules and procedures of USA Softball and in a manner that shall protect the integrity and reputation of USA Softball.
- G. **Signage and Display.** All National invitational tournaments must clearly display on all of the tournament literature that the tournament is a national invitational tournament. All references to National Championship Finals are strictly forbidden. Any violation of this section shall make the tournament director(s) liable to USA Softball or its local association for any damage caused by the improper promotion of the tournament.
- H. **Tournament Report.** A tournament report must be sent to the National Office no later than 30 days following the completion of the tournament. Failure to comply could result in withholding future tournament sanctions (Tournament Report Forms are provided by the National Office).
- I. **Qualifying Team Eligibility.** Teams who enter championship play and qualify to advance to the next level of championship play are not eligible to participate in any USA Softball national invitational tournament until the team is eliminated from further championship play.

Article 316 Levels of Non-Championship Play.

- A. **Levels of Non-Championship Play.** USA Softball recognizes the following levels of non-championship play:

01. Local league (city or county)

02. Invitational

- B. **Non-Championship Local League.** USA Softball, as national governing body for softball in the United States understands that local city or county leagues may adopt and use USA Softball's official playing rules. The use of any or all of USA Softball's playing rules is strictly a local matter and the rules may be altered as league officials deem necessary to conduct their own league play. USA Softball expressly disclaims any and all liability associated with the use of its official playing rules or any modification of its official playing rules. One of the primary purposes of USA Softball's official playing rules, including its equipment standards, is to promote competitive balance and to preserve the integrity of the sport of amateur softball. USA Softball's official playing rules, or any modification thereof, should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators or others will be safe or free from injury or harm. As stated in the preamble to the USA Softball Procedural Code, there are many risks and dangers incidental to the game of softball and USA Softball disclaims any and all liability associated with the game of softball or the use of its Bylaws, Procedural Code, or Rules. USA Softball does not review, sanction or approve of any modifications to its official playing rules. To the extent USA Softball's official playing rules are modified by local leagues; such modification may increase the potential or likelihood of injury, death or property loss, including the dangers associated with increased batted ball speeds. USA Softball shall not be responsible for any injury (including death) or property loss to any person in connection with any modification of USA Softball's official playing rules or the use of USA Softball's rules or any modified rules at any game or event.
- C. **Non-Championship Invitational Tournament Play.** Invitational tournaments may be conducted by the local association and sanctioned by USA Softball provided the following conditions are met:
- 01. **Teams.** Only teams USA Softball-registered are eligible to participate.
 - 02. **Umpires.** Registered USA Softball umpires must be used.
 - 03. **Sanction and Sanction Fee.** Only the local association in whose territory the tournament is conducted may sanction a tournament and shall be entitled to charge a sanction fee.
- D. **Use of USA Softball Official Playing Rules.** USA Softball's official playing rules are designed to be used at USA Softball championship events and implemented by USA Softball officials and volunteers. USA Softball shall not be responsible for any injury (including death) or property loss to any person in connection with the use and implementation of USA Softball's official playing rules at any event, whether or not the event is recognized or sanctioned by USA Softball.

PART FOUR ADMINISTRATION

Article 401 ELECTED OFFICERS.

- A. **President.**
- B. **President Elect.**
- C. **Immediate Past President.**

The three elected officers above are governed in accordance with **Section 8 of the USAS Bylaws**

D. **Regional Vice Presidents** are governed in accordance with **Section 7 of the USAS Bylaws.**

E. **Regional Directors.**

- 01. **Election.** A regional director from each region shall be elected prior to or at the annual meeting. The regional director shall reside within his/her respective regional boundaries and come from the National Council members of the respective region and shall be elected by a majority vote of the region's National Council members, local association Junior Olympic commissioners, local association player representatives and local umpires-in-chief.
- 02. **Term of Office.** Regional directors shall serve a term of two years that shall begin at the conclusion of the annual Council meeting.
- 03. **Removal.** A regional director may be removed for just cause by a 2/3 vote of that region's national Council members, local Junior Olympic commissioners, local player representatives, and local umpires-in-chief or a 2/3 vote of the Board of Directors.
- 04. **Vacancy.** A regional director vacancy due to death, incapacitation, resignation or other reason may be filled by a vote of the Council members, local association Junior Olympic commissioners, local association player representatives and local umpires-in-chief of the affected region.
- 05. **Duties.** A regional director shall conduct regional business including awarding of the regional tournaments in their region. A regional director will verify that all regional's, national qualifiers, and national championships hosted by their region are listed on www.tournamentUSAsoftball.com.

Article 402 BOARD OF DIRECTORS are governed in accordance with **Section 7 of the USAS Bylaws.**

Article 403 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER "CEO" is governed in accordance with **Section 14 of the USAS Bylaws.**

Chief Executive Officer "CEO" Emeritus. Upon retirement after completion of 30 years of service to USA Softball, the Board of Directors may choose to elect the Chief Executive Officer to the position of Chief Executive Officer Emeritus.

Article 404 NATIONAL COUNCIL. The National Council shall be governed in accordance with **Section 9 of the USAS Bylaws.**

- A. **Individual Council Members** will be selected and governed in accordance with **Sections 9, 15 and 16 of the USAS Bylaws.**
- B. **Lifetime Pass.** A Council member who has served for five or more years may be given a lifetime pass to USA Softball events when they resign, if approved by the Board of Directors.

Article 405 COMMISSIONERS. A local association commissioner is the principal liaison between a local association and USA Softball. Local Association Commissioners shall be governed in accordance with **Sections 5, 6, 7, 10, 15 and 16 of the USAS Bylaws.**

- A. **Term.** A commissioner shall serve until they resign or are removed from office.
- B. **Duties and Penalties.** The duties of a commissioner are those duties promulgated by the Board of Directors and the CEO and shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - 01. Represent the best interest of USA Softball in his/her association.
 - 02. Remit annually, on or before June 1, registration fees totaling **\$1,500.00** or more.
 - 03. Being responsible for all moneys and dues owed to USA Softball. Team and umpire registration fees must be remitted within 30 days of receipt. Failure to do so is grounds for suspension and removal.
 - 04. Awarding and supervising all tournaments in his/her local association area.
 - 05. Appointing deputy and/or district commissioners, an umpire-in-chief, a Junior Olympic softball commissioner, and such other persons as may be required.
 - 06. Being responsible for the establishment of a USA Softball championship play classification code to determine team and/or player classifications to be used in the local association (**See Article 307**).
 - 07. Coordinating an annual meeting of the local association, and filing with the CEO, within thirty days after the meeting or prior to December 31, of the current year, a complete report of this meeting on a form supplied by the CEO.
 - 08. Associations shall submit copy of appropriate IRS Form 990 by the date including extensions as required by the IRS.
 - 09. Enforcing and abiding by the rules and regulations of USA Softball in their local association area as promulgated by the USA Softball Bylaws and USA Softball Procedural Code.
 - 10. Commissioners that host regional, territory, and national qualifying tournaments are responsible to see that advancing team's rosters and affidavits are forwarded to the National Championship Finals.
 - 11. Commissioners whose association is hosting a National Championship Final must turn in all financial reports.
 - 12. No commissioner is eligible for office in this Association or receive travel or hotel remuneration to the annual meeting, unless all duties as set forth in **Article 405** have been fully performed.
 - 13. Each local association shall file with the National Office, no later than May 31st of each year, a listing of all championship tournaments (excluding sub district, district, county) to be held in the commissioner's association during the current year.
 - 14. All regional, territory, national qualifying tournaments and all championship finals tournaments will use www.tournamentUSASoftball.com.
 - 15. Each local association shall have an active, up to date website maintained throughout the calendar year. At minimum, the website should include the following content areas: tournaments, local and national; contact information, local and

national; registration information for adult and Junior Olympic teams/individuals and umpires; insurance; equipment standards; ACE and background check information; and a link to national USA Softball website. (Suggested details to include in each content area may be found on the Communication Committee's website review check list, which is updated annually.)

16. Each Commissioner shall ensure that a background check is performed annually by January 1st on every council member within their association.

C. Restricted Activities.

01. No sporting goods manufacturer, dealer, representative or employee thereof may hold office or serve as commissioner in this Association without full disclosure and approval of the Board of Directors.
02. No person allied with a competing softball association is eligible for office or to serve as a local commissioner. The Board of Directors of USA Softball has the final decision regarding the definition of a competing association.
03. No local association commissioner may umpire at a state, regional or National Championship Final hosted within his/her own local association.
04. A commissioner may serve only in an advisory capacity with a local association or as its secretary and/or treasurer.
05. No local association commissioner may coach, be allied with, or be involved in the decision making of any team.

D. Vacancies. If a commissioner position should become vacated for any reason, a panel consisting of the President, or his/her designee; the respective Regional Vice President, or their designee; the respective Regional Director, or his/her designee; the USA Softball CEO, or his/her designee and the Director of Membership Services, or his/her designee shall:

01. **Association Review.** Determine the viability of the association by conducting an Association review to include but not be limited to the following performance indicators.
 - a. All duties of the Commissioner as promulgated by the USA Softball Procedural Code.
 - b. The Annual Registration/Assessment Report.
 - c. The Five-Year Registration reports that includes adult and Junior Olympic teams and all umpires.
02. **Association Review Options.** Based on the findings of the review, the panel shall make a written recommendation to the Board of Directors to:
 - a. Retain the association as it currently stands.
 - b. Retain the association under recommended actions of the committee.
 - c. Merge the association with another existing local association. Remove the association as the local association member for its geographical area and appoint a substitute local association member for that geographical area.
 - d. Merge the association with another existing local association member. The Board shall consider the finding and recommendations of the review and thereafter take action pursuant to a majority vote of the Board. Such action may include retention, removal, removal and substitution, or merger of a local association member. In such case, the Board's decision shall be final.
03. **Nomination.** If there is a functioning Local Association, that Association shall appoint who its temporary commissioner shall be. Should the Local Association fail

to appoint a temporary commissioner, the Panel shall appoint a temporary commissioner who shall serve until a permanent commissioner is appointed by the Local Association. The Board of Directors shall have approval rights of all appointees in accordance with Section 6 of the Bylaws and **Article 502 A of this Procedural Code**.

04. **Evaluation.** If a temporary commissioner is appointed by the Panel, then the newly appointed temporary commissioner must serve a minimum of six months prior to being reviewed by the Commissioner Appointment Panel. After reviewing the appointees' performance, the Panel shall make a written recommendation to the Local Association and the Board of Directors to make the appointed commissioner interim, permanent, or to reject the appointee.

Article 406 ASSOCIATION AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS. A local association commissioner and association is responsible for all registration requirements, fees and dues to USA Softball.

- A. **Registration Requirements.** Any local association that does not register a combined minimum of 500 adult and Junior Olympic softball teams including payment during any given year shall be referred to the Board of Directors for possible reallocation of territory to other associations.
- B. **Affiliation Fee.** Each local association shall pay annually an affiliation fee of **\$1,000.00** and shall be responsible for membership dues as set forth in **Article 406**. The **\$1,000.00** payment may be made in two installments as follows: **\$500.00** on or before January 31 and **\$500.00** on or before June 30.

NOTE: Any affiliation fee not received by the deadline dates will incur a **\$250.00** late fee.

- C. **Dues.** Local Association dues for Individual Registrations (including insurance), Scorekeepers, Teams and Umpires shall be recommended by the Board of Directors and ratified vote of the Commissioners.

NOTE: Each local association may individually register Junior Olympic and/or adult players, managers, coaches, or team officials. Every 10 persons registered individually shall be counted as one team. Each Junior Olympic team must include one adult registration. Each Association may submit their individuals, umpires, and team registrations through a compatible and USA Softball Board of Director approved registration system of their choice that best suits their Association needs.

- D. **Boundaries.** The boundaries of a local association shall be on file in the National Office, signed by the commissioner. A local association making a complaint or a request for a change of boundary of another association must first make request of the association to be affected. If the associations involved in the request do not resolve the matter they may request a hearing before the Board of Directors. The request must be filed with the National Office by October 1, and is to include full documentation of the request. The Board of Directors decision on the request shall be final.

- E. **Special Provision.** Upon application and acceptance by the Council, any territory or possession of the United States may become a member. The USA Softball Board of Directors will select the commissioner.
- F. **Corporate Entity.** Each local association shall be registered as a Not for Profit corporate entity in the state the local association is located.
- G. **Tax-Exempt.** Each local association corporate entity shall be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a “tax-exempt” organization.

Article 407 JUNIOR OLYMPIC COMMISSIONERS.

A. Local Junior Olympic Commissioners.

- 01. **Selection.** A local association Junior Olympic commissioner shall be appointed by each local commissioner.
- 02. **Term of Office.** The local Junior Olympic commissioner shall serve a term of one year and be eligible for re-appointment.
- 03. **Vacancy.** If the local Junior Olympic commissioner position becomes vacant, it shall be filled by appointment by the local commissioner.
- 04. **Removal.** A local Junior Olympic softball commissioner may be removed for just cause by the local commissioner.
- 05. **Duties.** A local Junior Olympic commissioner shall represent his/her local association at all regional, territorial, and national meetings and shall be eligible for appointment to regional, territorial, and national committees.

B. Regional Junior Olympic Commissioners.

- 01. **Election.** A regional Junior Olympic commissioner shall reside within his/her respective regional boundaries and come from the National Council members of the respective region and shall be elected by a majority vote of the region’s National Council members, local association Junior Olympic commissioners, local association player representatives and local umpires-in-chief
- 02. **Term of Office.** The regional Junior Olympic softball commissioner shall serve a term of one year and be eligible for re-election.
- 03. **Vacancy.** If the position of regional Junior Olympic softball commissioner becomes vacant, it shall be filled by appointment of the regional director until the next regional meeting.
- 04. **Removal.** A regional Junior Olympic softball commissioner may be removed by a two – thirds (2/3) vote of that region’s national Council members, local Junior Olympic commissioners, local player representatives and local umpires-in-chief.
- 05. **Duties.**
 - a. Regional Junior Olympic commissioners shall represent their region in all regional and territorial meetings and shall be eligible for appointment to committees.
 - b. Assist the Regional Vice President in coordinating all activities regarding the Junior Olympic program in their region.
 - c. Assist local association Junior Olympic commissioners in the development of their respective Junior Olympic programs.

Article 408 LOCAL ASSOCIATION ATHLETE REPRESENTATIVES.

01. **Selection.** A local association athlete representative shall be appointed by each local commissioner. The appointee must meet the eligibility requirement in accordance with Bylaw 9.3 E.
02. **Term of Office.** Local association athlete representatives shall serve a term of one year and may be re-appointed only if they continue to meet the eligibility requirement in accordance with Bylaw 9.3 E.
03. **Vacancy.** If a local association athlete representative position becomes vacant, it shall be filled by appointment by the local association commissioner. The appointee must meet the eligibility requirement in accordance with Bylaw 9.3 E.
04. **Removal.** A local association athlete representative may be removed by their respective local commissioner.
05. **Duties.** Local association athlete representatives shall represent his/her local association in all local, regional, territorial, and national meetings and be eligible for appointment to committees, forums, and panels.

Article 409 PLAYER REPRESENTATIVES.

A. Regional.

01. **Election.** A regional player representative shall reside within his/her respective regional boundaries and shall be elected by a majority vote of the region's National Council members, local association Junior Olympic commissioners, local association player representatives and local umpires-in-chief
02. **Term of Office.** Regional player representatives shall serve a term of one year and are eligible for re-election.
03. **Vacancy.** If a regional player representative position becomes vacant, it shall be filled by appointment of the regional director until the next regional meeting.
04. **Removal.** Regional player representatives may be removed for just cause by a two – thirds (2/3) vote of that region's national Council members, local Junior Olympic commissioners, local player representatives and local umpires-in-chief.
05. **Duties.** Regional player representatives shall represent his/her region, in all regional, territorial, and national meetings and shall be eligible for appointment to committees.

B. At-Large.

01. **Appointment.** Each local association Commissioner shall appoint one at-large player representative for each 2,000 teams registered the preceding year.
02. **Term of office.** At-large player representatives shall serve a term of one year and are eligible for re-appointment.
03. **Vacancy.** If an at-large player representative position becomes vacant, it shall be filled by appointment by the local association commissioner.
04. **Removal.** An at-large player representative may be removed for just cause by his/her respective local association commissioner.
05. **Duties.** At-large player representatives shall represent his/her local association at all regional, territorial and national meetings and shall be eligible for appointment to committees.
06. **Competing Association.** No person allied with a competing softball association and/or organization is eligible for office or to serve as an at-large player representative.

Article 410 UMPIRES-IN-CHIEF.

A. Local Umpire-In-Chief.

01. **Selection.** A local association umpire-in-chief shall be appointed by each local commissioner.
02. **Term of Office.** The local association umpire-in-chief shall serve a term of one year and be eligible for re-appointment.
03. **Vacancy.** If the local association umpire-in-chief position becomes vacant, it shall be filled by appointment by the local commissioner.
04. **Removal.** A local association umpire-in-chief may be removed for just cause by his/her respective local commissioner.
05. **Duties.** A local association umpire-in-chief shall represent his/her local association at all regional and territorial meetings and shall be eligible for appointment to regional and territory committees.

B. Regional Umpire-In-Chief.

01. **Election.** A regional umpire-in-chief shall reside within his/her respective regional boundaries and shall be elected by a majority vote of the region's National Council members, local association Junior Olympic commissioners, local association player representatives and local umpires-in-chief
02. **Term of Office.** The regional umpire-in-chief shall serve a term of one year and be eligible for re-election.
03. **Vacancy.** If the regional umpire-in-chief position becomes vacant, it shall be filled by appointment of the regional director until the next regional meeting.
04. **Removal.** A regional umpire-in-chief may be removed for just cause by a two – thirds (2/3) vote of that region's national Council members, local Junior Olympic commissioners, local player representatives and local umpires-in-chief.
05. **Duties.**
 - a. Regional umpires-in-chief shall represent his/her region in all regional, territorial, and national meetings and shall be eligible for appointment to committees.
 - b. Assist his/her regional director Regional Vice President in coordinating all activities regarding the umpire program in their region.
 - c. Assist local umpires-in-chief in the development of their respective umpire programs.
 - d. Serve on the National Umpire Staff.
06. **Reimbursement.** The National Office shall reimburse the regional umpire-in-chief for any expenses incurred while acting in his/her official capacity. All other expenses are the responsibility of either the region or the local association commissioners.

C. National Championship Final Umpire-In-Chief.

01. **Umpire-in-Chief Assignment.** Each National Championship Final umpire-in-chief shall be assigned by the National Director of Umpires.
02. **Use of Assistant Umpires-in-Chief.** The use of an Assistant Umpire-in-Chief shall be governed as follows:
 - a. If a National Championship Final has more than 40 teams and plays on more than one (1) complex; or plays on more than four (4) fields, an assistant umpire-in-chief shall be assigned by the National Director of Umpires.

- b. If a National Championship Final has more than 100 teams, two (2) assistant umpires-in chief shall be assigned by the National Director of Umpires.
 - c. If a National Championship Final is played in more than 2 complexes, assistant umpire-in-chiefs shall be assigned by the National Director of Umpires.
 - d. If a championship adds complexes or fields that require additional Assistant UICs within ten (10) days of the start of the championship, the additional UICs shall be paid only for those days assigned at the added complexes/fields.
- D. **National Championship Finals Umpires Selection.** Selection of umpires for the National Championship Finals shall be made as follows:
01. **Assignment.** An umpire may umpire in only one Fast Pitch and one Slow Pitch National Championship Finals each year.

EXCEPTION: If additional umpires are necessary at the last minute due to the number of teams, an umpire can be assigned an additional tournament as a host umpire.

02. **Conflict of Assignment.** The tournament umpire-in-chief should avoid assigning umpires to a National Championship Final game in which his/her local association is participating whenever possible.
03. **Fast Pitch**
- a. **Men's Major.** The National Director of Umpires shall select all umpires.
 - b. **Junior Olympic USA Softball Girls' Gold National Championships.** The National Director of Umpires shall select all umpires.
 - c. **All other Fast Pitch National Championships.** Shall use a minimum of three (3) outside (at-large) umpires to be selected from within the respective region hosting the entries.
 - d. **Deficiencies.** Should there be a deficiency in the number of team entries, the tournament director in cooperation with the host commissioner, may contact the Regional Vice President who has the authority to reduce the number of assigned at-large umpires to no less than three (3).
04. **Modified Pitch.** The National Director of Umpires shall make the following assignments to the respective national championship finals:
- a. One third of the umpires assigned to the championship will come from the previous year's UIC recommendations and/or the previous year's championship umpires.
 - b. The balance of the umpires will be assigned by the National Director of Umpires.
05. **Slow Pitch.** The National Director of Umpires selects all umpires for the Men's Class A, Class B, Class Cm and Women's Open championships.

Article 411 AFFILIATED AND ALLIED MEMBERS. The Affiliated and Allied Members shall be selected and governed in accordance with **Section 5, 15 and 16 of the USAS Bylaws.**

- A. **Insurance.** Each allied/affiliated member shall obtain and maintain insurance for all softball programs (including tournaments and/or other activities) sponsored or organized by the allied member. Each allied member shall ensure that USA Softball is named as an additional named insured on all such insurance policies.

- B. **Registration.** Teams that are associated with Allied/Affiliated members of USA Softball, and for which the local association the team is from, does not offer a program may join USA Softball directly by paying a fee of \$10.00. The local association the team is from shall be given credit for the membership and all fees collected in excess of the normal team registration fee shall be credited to the account of the local association.

USA Softball membership shall be opened and available to any such team not currently registered with USA Softball or USA Softball's local association, upon application and upon the team's satisfaction of all requirements of the applicable local association.

- C. **Tournaments.** For all national tournaments or world tournaments organized by any allied member, the allied member shall pay USA Softball a tournament fee of **\$200** per tournament. A multiple tournament rate can be negotiated with the Chief Executive Officer and must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Article 412 USA SOFTBALL HALL OF FAME.

- A. **Purpose.** To honor those men and women who have played a major role in the growth and development of softball, one of the great sports of the United States. Also, to bring to the attention of the public, the widespread value of, and interest in, the game of softball by so honoring those who have made outstanding contributions to its' success. Their contributions must exceed the expectations of their regularly assigned position.

- B. **Nomination Requirements.**

01. **Categories.**

a. **Players.**

- i. **Selection.** To be selected for the USA Softball Hall of Fame, a person must have been an active player in USA Softball who is no longer playing at the highest level.
- ii. **Evaluation.** The length of playing time is to be considered as a factor in the evaluation of candidates. No minimum playing time is required. Fame at the national level shall be used as a gauge for candidacy, and it shall be national fame at a National Championship Final level. Factual and detailed information must be presented to the committee before a candidate can be accepted. Scrapbooks and newspaper clippings are acceptable, also letters from competent references.
- iii. **Prerequisites.**
 - a) **Fast Pitch.** The minimum requirements for consideration are three selections as an All-American including at least one selection to the First Team; or three selections as a member of Team USA or any combination of the three.

NOTE: The selection process developed by a joint venture of USA Softball and the approval of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee must be utilized in selecting the national team. Multiple selections to Team USA during the same year will be limited to one (1) per season in determining eligibility for Hall of Fame induction.

- b) **Slow Pitch.** The minimum requirements for consideration are three selections as an All-American including at least one selection to the First Team; or three selections as a member of Team USA or any combination of the three.
 - b. **Umpires.** In order to be selected as an umpire, an umpire must meet the following criteria:
 - i. Umpired for a period of fifteen (15) years.
 - ii. Umpired in three (3) national championships, at least one at the highest available classification.
 - iii. Must have been retired at least three (3) years from major competition.
 - c. **Manager/Coach.** In order to be selected as a manager/coach, a manager/coach must meet the following criteria:
 - i. Managed/Coached for a period of fifteen (15) years.
 - ii. Managed/Coached in five (5) national championships.
 - iii. Must have been retired at least three (3) years from major championship play.
 - d. **Head Coaches.** In order to be selected as a head coach, a coach must meet the following criteria:
 - i. Must have been the head coach of a national team (Team USA) for a period of five (5) years.
 - ii. Win a minimum of two (2) WBSC approved International Championship events (World Championships, World Cups, International Cups, Border Battles and or the Olympics).
 - e. **Sponsors/Teams.** In order to be selected as a sponsor, a sponsor must meet the following criteria:
 - i. Sponsored a team(s) for ten (10) years.
 - ii. Participated in four (4) National Championship Finals.
 - Note:** In order to be selected as a team, a team must have won multiple National Championships.
 - f. **Commissioners.** In order to be selected, a commissioner must have been a commissioner for fifteen (15) years and have served in some of the following areas:
 - i. Served as Regional Director.
 - ii. Served as Chair or Vice-Chair of a national committee.
 - iii. Hosted National Championship Finals.
 - iv. Any special recognition received and/or other services to humanity.
 - g. **Meritorious Service.** This person's contributions must have reflected an impact at the national level.
- C. **Procedures.** Selections to the USA Softball Hall of Fame shall be as follows:
- 01. **Deadline.** Candidates must be submitted on or before September 1 of the current year.
 - 02. **Nomination Forms.** Each Council Member may nominate no more than two (2) candidates each year.
 - 03. **Evaluation of Candidates.** Factual and detailed information must be presented to the committee before a candidate can be accepted. Scrapbook and newspaper

clippings are acceptable; also, letters from competent references. A candidate will be considered five times, but the nominee does not need to be considered in consecutive years. The candidate may change categories at any time prior to selection by notifying the national office. If a candidate is not selected in either the first or second, third, or fourth year, the nomination will automatically be considered at the next council meeting unless the person who nominated the candidate informs the national office by September 1st to not consider the candidate that year. A person must receive seventy-five percent (75%) votes of the committee members who were present to be selected.

04. **Selections.** The names of the candidates for selection to the Hall of Fame shall remain confidential and released only to the Hall of Fame committee. Voting shall be conducted by written ballot. A maximum of ten (10) individuals may be selected to the Hall of Fame on an annual basis, there will not be any limits on the number of selections per category type.

EXCEPTION: Maximum selected may be 12 if two selections are players over the age of 60.

05. **Awards.** A specially designed plaque and a framed certificate shall be given to those elected to the Hall of Fame. In addition, each shall receive a Hall of Fame identification card, which shall permit the selectee and spouse to attend all USA Softball tournaments.
06. **Presentation.** An announcement of the year's selection shall be made at the USA Softball Council meeting with special stories sent to the home area of the selectees, as directed by the respective local commissioner.
07. **Induction.** Formal induction ceremonies and presentation of awards shall be made during the Annual Council Meeting Banquet.
08. **Removal.** The Hall of Fame committee, by three-fourths (3/4) vote, may with just cause, recommend removal of an individual elected to the Hall of Fame. Such recommendations, when approved by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Board of Directors, shall remove said individual from the Hall of Fame.

PART FIVE BUSINESS PROCEDURES

Article 501 COUNCIL MEETINGS.

- A. **Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting shall begin no earlier than October 15 and conclude no later than November 20.
01. **Notice.** Notice of an annual meeting shall be sent to all Council members by the CEO at least 30 days before the meeting.
02. **Voting.** On all matters coming before the annual meeting, each Council member shall be entitled to one vote.
03. **Quorum.** A quorum shall consist of the President or one or more regional director(s) and at least fifty percent (50%) plus one of the Council members.
04. **Proxy.** Authorization for representation of a Council member by proxy may be obtained by submitting a request for same in writing to the CEO at least one week prior to the date for the annual meeting.

NOTE: A proxy request for either a commissioner emeritus, council member emeritus or a Past President shall not be granted.

- a. **Active Membership.** In order for a proxy to be approved, they must have been an active member of said local association (deputy, district commissioner, board member or officer) or affiliated/allied members (employee, member or officer) requesting a proxy and be listed on the commissioner's annual report on file in the National Office no later than September 1. The affiliated/allied member's proxy must include with the proxy form proof of employment, proof of membership, or proof that they are an officer of his/her association for the current year.
- b. **Voting Privileges.** A proxy properly certified according to the preceding paragraphs is entitled to be in attendance at all meetings of this Association with the privilege of voting.
- c. **Financial Benefits.** A proxy shall receive the financial benefits extended to a Council member.
- d. **Duration of Authority.** A proxy for a regional player representative or a regional UIC may be approved by the Board of Directors, upon recommendation of the regional director, provided the proxy is a representative of a local association within his/her region and is so listed on file with the CEO no later than September 1 of the current year. Such proxy must also conform to all the other requirements for a Council member's proxy. A proxy must serve for the entire Council meeting. Single day or partial day proxies will not be approved.

Article 502 WORKING COMMITTEES. Appointments including the designation of Chairs and Co-Chairs to all working committees shall be made annually by the President. Any working committee which receives donations or hosts fundraising events must produce balance sheets for the proceeds: which will be reviewed by the Board of Directors. These monies must be received by a 501 organization.

Working committees shall meet in person at the USAS Annual Meeting. Committees are strongly encouraged to hold additional meetings throughout the year as needed to conduct

USAS business efficiently and thoroughly. The frequency and mode of these meetings will be determined by the committee chairpersons, USAS staff, and the USAS President.

- A. **Commissioner Appointment.** This working committee shall make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding commissioner's interim status to include but not limited to review of meeting the requirements outlined in **Article 405** as well as the following:
 - 01. Interview commissioner to determine status.
 - 02. Review association business plan.
 - 03. Review items association has implemented for growth.
 - 04. Review staff appointments made by commissioner.
- B. **Legislative** This working committee shall attend to all legislative matters pertaining to the total operation of USA Softball as prescribed by the Procedural Code. Its duties shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - 01. Respond to all requests from Council members for assistance in preparation of amendments to the Procedural Code.
 - 02. Initiate and receive for consideration and present in proper form for action all proposed amendments to the Procedural Code.
 - 03. Encourage all Council members to consult and correspond with this committee relative to any problems of interpretation of the Procedural Code. This shall enable the committee, by study and research, to clarify many points now in practice that have been improved in our past operations.
- C. **Membership Improvement.** This working committee shall consist of at least two members from each USA Softball territory and shall provide a program for increasing membership of all types in USA Softball. Its duties shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - 01. Urge commissioners to enroll teams and umpires as early as possible in the current year and provide a systematic plan for increasing the membership of this Association and general promotion of softball.
 - 02. Urge commissioners to secure the basic team fee included in the registration and entry fee of teams in leagues to insure the total registration of teams in USA Softball early in the season.
 - 03. Encourage commissioners to report team and umpire memberships on the correct forms promptly to the National Office with the remittance of fees.
 - 04. Review commissioners whose membership production is unsatisfactory and conduct hearings and make recommendations to the Board of Directors.
- D. **Playing Rules.** This working committee shall review, study and formulate the Official Playing Rules governing the game of softball including, but not limited to Fast Pitch, Modified Pitch and Slow Pitch.
- E. **Special Programs Forum.** This working committee shall make recommendations to the National Council as to programs or events for the special needs population. It will review any request for special programming submitted by a National Council member.
- F. **Tournament Programs, Awards, and Review.** This working committee shall consist of the immediate Past President and two (2) council members from each territory, appointed by the President; be at least twenty (20) members, at least one from each region and not less than five (5) from each territory. Its duties shall include but not be limited to:

01. Reviewing standards and procedures for conducting National Championships.
 02. Reviewing and updating all National Championship evaluation forms.
 03. Recommending potential legislation in the area of National Championships.
 04. Meeting with all bidding cities at the National Council Meeting to review the rules and time limits on their bid presentation, the order in which the tournaments will be bid, and the order that the cities will present their bids to the council.
 05. Review all bids and has the authority to accept or reject all bids.
- G. **Ad Hoc.** Those working committees created by the President for special purposes. These panels and forums shall be effective January 1 of the year through December 31, and must be re-appointed by the President.
- H. **Girls' Fastpitch National Championship Committee.** The working committee shall consist of two (2) members from each USA Softball Territory and one (1) At-Large council member. Its duties shall include but are not limited to the following:
01. Accept girls' fastpitch national championship bids, review bids, and place national championship locations.
 02. Accept applications from teams for unused berths to national championships that were turned back to the panel.

Article 503 PROCEDURAL CODE AMENDMENTS AND RULE CHANGES

- A. **Amendments to the USA Softball Procedural Code.** Amendments to the USA Softball Procedural Code shall be governed as follows:
01. **Regular Procedure.**
 - a. Amendments to the USA Softball Procedural Code proposed under **Article 503** may be approved only at duly called Council Meetings upon a sixty percent (60%) affirmative vote of those in attendance and entitled to vote at such meeting.
 - b. A proposed amendment to the Procedural Code submitted by a member of the Council or CEO must be in writing, signed by the member submitting the proposal and received by the CEO by September 15th; however, the Chair of the Legislative Committee may submit proposed amendments to the USA Softball Procedural Code at any time before the CEO mails and or electronically mails written notice of all properly submitted proposed amendments as required in **Article 503** below.
 - c. At least fifteen (15) days prior to the start of the Annual Meeting, the CEO shall mail and/or electronically mail to each member of the Council written notice of all properly submitted proposed amendments.
 - d. Prior to the vote of the Council, the Legislative Committee shall review each proposed amendment to the USA Softball Procedural Code; and shall issue a report that details the recommendation of the Legislative Committee as to whether each proposed amendment should be accepted or rejected by the Council. The report shall recommend that each proposed amendment be rejected unless sixty percent (60%) of the Legislative Committee voted to recommend acceptance of such proposed amendment.
 - e. Revisions to proposed amendments to the USA Softball Procedural Code may be made at any time prior to the vote of the Council if the author(s) of such proposed amendment consents to such revision and either: (1) sixty percent (60%) of the members of the Legislative Committee vote to accept such revision during a meeting of such committee; or (2) seventy-five percent (75%) of the

Council Members vote to accept such revision. Before a properly revised amendment may be voted upon by the Council, the proposed amendment, as revised, shall be read to the Council in open session.

- f. Upon a motion duly made, seconded and approved by a vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of those in attendance and entitled to vote at an annual Council Meeting, the Council may consider any amendment to the USA Softball Procedural Code which was not proposed in the manner specified by this **Article 503**.
 - g. Unless otherwise specified in the amendment, any amendment approved by the Council shall be effective on January 1st of the following year.
 - h. When the Council votes to approve a report of any committee other than the Legislative Committee, the Council is voting only to approve that report and is not voting to make any changes to the USA Softball Procedural Code.
02. **Emergency Procedure.** Between annual meetings of the Council, any Council member or CEO may submit a proposed amendment to the USA Softball Procedural Code to the Chair of the Legislative Committee and ask that an emergency be declared and the proposed amendment submitted for a vote of the Council in the manner outlined in this **Article 503**. If the Chair of the Legislative Committee believes that the proposed amendment is of sufficient importance that it should be acted upon by the Council prior to their next scheduled meeting, the Chair shall forward the proposed amendment to the President. If the President agrees with the Chair of the Legislative Committee that the proposed amendment is of sufficient importance that it should be acted upon by the Council prior to their next scheduled meeting, then an emergency shall be declared and the proposed amendment shall be submitted to the members of the Council for a vote in the manner outlined in **Article 503**. The proposed amendment shall be mailed and or electronically mailed to each member of the Council. There will be a waiting period of fifteen (15) days from the date the proposed amendment was mailed and or electronically mailed for any council member that wishes to write a rebuttal to the proposed amendment. After the waiting period the national office will send a copy of the ballot and a copy of the rebuttal to the proposed amendment to all council members asking each council member to accept or reject the proposed amendment. The deadline for returning ballots shall be not less than ten (10) nor more than thirty (30) days after the rebuttals and ballots were mailed and or electronically mailed. Each ballot must be signed and or electronically signed by a Council member and received by USA Softball prior to the deadline in order to be counted. If valid ballots are received from less than or exactly fifty percent (50%) of the members of the Council by the deadline, then the proposed amendment shall be deemed rejected. If valid ballots are received from more than fifty percent (50%) of the members of the Council by the deadline, then the proposed amendment shall be deemed rejected unless two-thirds (2/3) of the ballots received vote to accept the proposed amendment.

B. Playing Rule Changes.

01. **Regular Procedure.** Except as provided in **Article 503** below, any proposed amendment to the USA Softball Playing Rules shall be proposed and acted upon only in accordance with the regular procedure outlined herein.

- a. Amendments to the USA Softball Playing Rules proposed under **Article 503** may be approved only at duly called Council Meetings upon a sixty percent (60%) affirmative vote of those in attendance and entitled to vote at such meeting.
 - b. A proposed amendment to the Playing Rules submitted by a member of the Council or CEO must be in writing, signed by the member submitting the proposal and received by the CEO by September 15th; however, the Chair of the Playing Rules Committee and the Chair of the Equipment Testing and Certification Committee may each submit proposed amendments to the USA Softball Playing Rules at any time before the CEO mails and or electronically mails written notice of all properly submitted proposed amendments as required in **Article 503**.
 - c. At least fifteen (15) days prior to the start of the Annual Meeting, the CEO shall mail and/or electronically mail to each member of the Council written notice of all properly submitted proposed amendments.
 - d. Prior to the vote of the Council, the Playing Rules Committee shall review each proposed amendment to the USA Softball Playing Rules and shall issue a report which details the recommendation of the Playing Rules Committee as to whether each proposed amendment should be accepted or rejected by the Council. The report shall recommend that each proposed amendment be rejected unless sixty percent (60%) of the Playing Rules Committee voted to recommend acceptance of such proposed amendment.
 - e. Revisions to proposed amendments to the USA Softball Playing Rules may be made at any time prior to a vote of the Council if the author(s) of such proposed amendment consents to such revision and either: (1) sixty percent (60%) of the members of the Playing Rules Committee vote to accept such revision during a meeting of such committee; or (2) seventy-five percent (75%) of the council Members vote to accept such revision. Before a properly revised amendment may be voted upon by the Council, the proposed amendment, as revised, shall be read to the Council in open session.
 - f. Upon a motion duly made, seconded and approved by a vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of those in attendance and entitled to vote at an annual Council meeting, the Council may consider any amendment to the USA Softball Playing Rules which was not proposed in the manner specified by **Article 503**.
 - g. Unless otherwise specified in the amendment, any amendment approved by the Council shall be effective January 1st of the following year.
 - h. When the Council votes to approve a report of any committee other than the Playing Rules Committee, the Council is voting only to approve that report and is not voting to make any changes to the USA Softball Playing Rules.
02. **Emergency Procedure.** Between annual meetings of the Council, any Council member or CEO may submit a proposed amendment to USA Softball Playing Rules to the Chair of the Playing Rules Committee and ask that an emergency be declared and the proposed amendment submitted for a vote of the Council in the manner outlined in **Article 503**. If the Chair of the Playing Rules Committee believes that the proposed amendment is of sufficient importance that it should be acted upon by the Council prior to their next scheduled meeting, the Chair shall forward the proposed amendment to the President. If the President agrees with the Chair of the Playing Rules Committee that the proposed amendment is of sufficient importance that it should be acted upon by the Council prior to their next scheduled meeting, then an

emergency shall be declared and the proposed amendment shall be submitted to the members of the Council for a vote in the manner outlined in **Article 503**. The proposed amendment shall be mailed and or electronically mailed to each member of the Council. There will be a waiting period of fifteen (15) days from the date the proposed amendment was mailed and or electronically mailed for any council member that wishes to write a rebuttal to the proposed amendment. After the waiting period the national office will send a copy of the ballot and a copy of the rebuttal to the proposed amendment to all council members asking each council member to accept or reject the proposed amendment. The deadline for returning ballots shall be not less than ten (10) nor more than thirty (30) days after the rebuttals and ballots were mailed and or electronically mailed. Each ballot must be signed and or electronically signed by a Council member and received by the USA Softball prior to the deadline in order to be counted. If valid ballots are received from less than or exactly fifty percent (50%) of the members of the Council by the deadline, then the proposed amendment shall be deemed rejected. If valid ballots are received from more than fifty percent (50%) of the members of the Council by the deadline, then the proposed amendment shall be deemed rejected unless two – thirds (2/3) of the ballots received vote to accept the proposed amendment.

Article 504 TRADEMARKS. All trademarks, service marks and logos referring to or relating in any way to USA Softball, and the trade name of USA Softball, are the exclusive property of USA Softball and may not be used without the express written authority of USA Softball.

Article 505 ASSIGNMENT OF COPYRIGHT.

- A. The Official Rules of Softball, having been assigned to USA Softball on May 31, 1980, from the International Joint Rules Committee on Softball (**IJRCS**), are those rules as published by USA Softball in their annual guide and are incorporated herein by reference.
- B. The copyright number 270057, registered with the Copyright Office of the United States of America, specifies the rights and interests of the Official Playing Rules that were adopted by the USA Softball Council by mail ballot on October 10, 1980, to become effective January 1, 1981.

PART SIX BID PROCEDURES

Article 601 BIDDING FOR A NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING. Bids to host the annual meeting shall be made in accordance with the following procedures:

- A. The CEO or his/her designee shall negotiate, secure and award the contract for the USA Softball Annual Council Meeting. The USA Softball Board of Directors will decide the final site of the meeting.

EXCEPTION: The USA Softball Annual meeting will be in Oklahoma City every three (3) years.

- B. Council meeting bids may be accepted and awarded three years in advance when satisfactory conditions are guaranteed.
- C. The CEO shall handle all arrangements and negotiations for hotel facilities and shall be responsible for signing all necessary contractual agreements. They shall report their recommendations to the Board of Directors for consideration and action. Prior to presenting bids to the Board of Directors, the CEO and/or his/her designee shall inspect the proposed facilities to ensure that the proposed facilities meet the required specifications for hosting the USA Softball National Council Meeting.

Article 602 BIDDING FOR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS.

- A. **Submitting Bid.** The actual bid itself must be submitted on the official USA Softball bid form.
- B. **Photographs.** When an association bids on National Championship Finals, photographs of the field must be included with the bid.
- C. **Site Specification Form.** Prior to bidding on a national championship, a site specifications form and 8 x 10 glossy photos of the playing fields and spectator areas for the site of the proposed tournament must be on file with the National Office by July 1.
- D. **Site Inspection.** Site specifications forms may be secured from local association commissioners. The commissioner shall personally inspect the site as provided in the site specification form and certify that the requirements have been met.
- E. **Bylaws/Procedural Code/Contract Compliance.** Tournament hosts shall comply with all procedures as set forth by the USA Softball Procedural Code and included in the tournament contract.
- F. **Bids must be filed with the national office by July 1.**
 - 01. The bid shall be opened and screened in the national office by a tournament review committee and the results shall be sent to the Council for review at least 15 days prior to the start of the Annual Council Meeting.
 - 02. All national championship bids must be submitted through the respective local association commissioner in whose area the tournament shall be held.
 - 03. All tournament bids must include all fees required from the teams, including but not limited to entry fee, gate fee, housing surcharge, or other fees.
- G. **Reservation of Bid.** USA Softball reserves the right not to bid any tournament, but to place that tournament at a site approved by the USA Softball Board of Directors.

H. Awarded at the National Meeting.

01. The bids shall be awarded at the annual meeting by a majority vote of the Council members. Within divisions of play, the tournament with the highest number of bidders shall present their bids to the Council first; the tournament with the second highest number shall present their bids to the Council second and so on. In case of ties, a draw shall determine which tournament is to be presented first. If at any time during the voting, there are more than three bidders for a national championship and no one bidder receives a majority vote, then the two bidders with the least number of votes shall be eliminated from the next round of voting.

NOTE: For the purpose of establishing a majority, votes cast for cities that have been eliminated or that have withdrawn shall not be considered a vote.

02. In any National Championship final with an East/West concept, council members will vote on those tournaments that are in the section they represent.
03. In any National Championship final with an Eastern/Northern/Southern/Western concept, council members will vote on the tournaments that are in their respective territory.
04. All Seniors Slow Pitch National Championship Finals shall be bid together and conducted at the same site.
05. All Junior Olympic Boy's Slow Pitch (18-Under, 16-Under, 14-Under, 12-Under and 10-Under) National Championship Finals shall be bid together and conducted at the same site on the same weekend.
06. The CEO shall have the first option to place any National Championship Final in the USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium that is not bid on at the annual Council meeting.
07. Cities bidding for the Men's Major Fast Pitch National Championship Final must have two adjacent fields to host the tournament.
08. The Junior Olympic USA Softball Girls 16-Under Gold and 18-Under Gold Fast Pitch National Championship Finals site will be determined by the CEO.
09. All Junior Olympic Slow Pitch will be played together at one site.
10. All Co-ed Slow Pitch National Championship finals shall be bid together and conducted at the same site.
11. The Men's Masters Slow Pitch 35-Over and 45-Over will be played at the same site.
12. There will be at least one USA Softball Junior Olympic National Championship Finals in each Territory.
13. The following Championships will be placed and approved by the CEO.
 - a. Boy's Slow Pitch
 - b. Girls' Slow Pitch
 - c. Boy's and Men's Fast Pitch
 - d. Girls' 10-Under Class A Fast Pitch East/West
 - e. Men's Modified Pitch
 - f. Coed Slow Pitch
 - g. Men's Major and Class A 16-Inch Slow Pitch
 - h. Men's Senior East/West Slow Pitch
 - i. Women's Slow Pitch
 - j. Women's Masters 35-Over Slow Pitch

- k. Men's Masters 35- Over Masters Slow Pitch
 - l. Men's 40-Over Slow Pitch
 - m. Men's 45-Over Slow Pitch
 - n. Men's Class A and Women's Open Slow Pitch
 - o. Men's Class B Slow Pitch
 - p. Fast Pitch National Invitational Tournaments (NIT)
 - q. Slow Pitch National Invitational Tournaments (NIT)
- I. **Bid is Awarded.** If the bid is awarded, the successful bidder must:
- 01. Remit one thousand **(\$1,000.00)** to USA Softball before December 31 as the tournament deposit. Deposit applies to total amount due per team entered in the tournament.
 - 02. USA Softball may not require any change after the bid is awarded unless approved by the National Championship Final Host Organizing Committee. The contract form from the National Office should conform to the bid and no changes should be made without approval of the National Championship Final Host Organizing Committee.
 - 03. Once a tournament is awarded to a bidding city, it cannot be moved without the consent of the Board of Directors.
- J. **Proposed Date.** The bid shall set forth the proposed date for the National Championship Final to not be in conflict with the National Championship Final dates prescribed in **Article 309**.
- K. **Evaluating and Rating.**
- 01. The most recent National Championship Final evaluation/rating of the bidder shall be listed on the National Championship Final bid summary sheet provided by the National Office.
 - 02. At their fall meeting, the Board of Directors shall review tournament host that received a rating less than seventy percent (70%) from the teams, the umpire-in-chief, the tournament representative or the National Office. This review shall take place at the Board of Directors (BOD) fall meeting, which the host or his/her designee shall be permitted to attend in order to speak on his/her behalf. After reviewing, the BOD may suspend a host's bidding privilege. Once bidding privileges have been suspended, a host must demonstrate to the BOD that all the necessary improvements or corrections have been made before they will be permitted to place another bid.
- L. **Tournament Programs, Awards, and Review Panel.** Each bidder shall be advised of the time and place the bid may be discussed with the Tournament Programs, Awards, and Review Panel at the annual meeting.
- M. **Only One Bid.** If there is only one bid for a National Championship Final, the Tournament Programs, Awards, and Review Panel shall make a recommendation to the Council based on all available data to the Panel as to accept or reject the single bid.
- N. **Presentation to Council.** Each delegation bidding for a National Championship Final shall be allowed three minutes to make presentations to the Council members. Delegations with multiple bids shall be allowed an additional one minute for each additional bid.
- O. **Hospitality.** Also, it is permissible to set up hospitality rooms and/or to hold reception or cocktail gatherings. This should be cleared in advance with the USA Softball CEO, so that adequate room or meeting space is available, and the function does not conflict with

any USA Softball scheduled activity. Room or meeting space expense is the responsibility of the bidding delegation.

- P. **Awarded Two Years in Advance.** National Championship Final bids may be accepted and awarded two years in advance when satisfactory conditions are guaranteed. New facilities must be completed prior to bid being presented.
- Q. **No Satisfactory Bid.** In the event that no satisfactory bid is received for a National Championship Final, the CEO shall recommend host cities for those tournaments not awarded to the Board of Directors at the Board meeting at the close of the Council meeting who shall determine the site.
- R. **Failure to Meet Obligation.** Associations failing to meet their obligations, such as filing reports and paying off their bids for previous National Championship Finals are not allowed to bid for any USA Softball tournaments until all moneys and reports are complete or written off by the Board of Directors or the commissioner is replaced.
- S. **Pre-Tournament Fact Sheet.** Host city must supply complete information for pre-tournament fact sheet at the conclusion of the council meeting in the year prior to the championship. Failure to do so without a reasonable explanation may result in host city forfeiting right to bid on a National Championship Final for a period of one year and then only with approval of the USA Softball CEO.
- T. **Status Report.** Commissioners, that are late in turning in financial reports upon completion of a National Championship Final, must at least turn in a preliminary Status Report and the reasons as to why the report and/or moneys are late by the deadline.
- U. **Championship Cancellation.** A National Championship shall not be cancelled without prior approval from the CEO.

Article 603 FAST PITCH, MODIFIED PITCH AND SLOW PITCH BIDS. A minimum bid fee for USA Softball established by the Board of Directors based on the value of each tournament. Bid fees would be evaluated on an annual basis and changes to any bid fees would be published well in advance of the deadline for submission of bids by bidding cities. The bidders are also responsible for:

- A. **Assessment Fee.** An assessment fee of **\$50.00** per team shall be paid to USA Softball (**\$25.00** for Slow Pitch and Adult Fast Pitch).

EXCEPTION: Tournaments with eight (8) teams or less pay no assessments to USA Softball.

- B. **Umpire Expense.** Umpire expenses must include the following:
 - 01. Game fees for Adult Fast Pitch, Junior Olympic Fast Pitch and Modified Pitch shall be a minimum of **\$50.00** per game. Game fees for Adult Slow Pitch shall be a minimum of **\$30.00** per game and game fees for Junior Olympic slow pitch shall be a minimum of **\$26.00** per game. The number of umpires to be assigned per game is addressed in **Article 310**.
 - 02. Housing accommodations.
 - a. Two umpires to a room.
 - b. An umpire who brings family, will be responsible for fifty percent (50%) of room cost.
 - c. Umpires are required to be present when the tournament starts, including pre-championship clinic.

- 03. Housing, local transportation for UIC and **\$125.00** per diem/per day for the tournament umpire-in-chief. The UIC shall arrive one day prior to the scheduled opening day of the Championship.
- 04. Housing, local transportation and **\$100.00** per diem/per day for the assistant tournament umpire-in-chief when one is assigned, see **Article 409**.
- 05. The UIC and Assistant UIC(s) (if assigned) may share a room if deemed necessary by the Tournament Host Committee.
- C. **Administrative Expenses.** Operational and administrative expenses including:
 - 01. Field maintenance.
 - 02. Police.
 - 03. Scorers, scoreboard attendants, ball chasers.
 - 04. Statistician-Announcer.
 - 05. Ticket sellers, collectors, ushers.
 - 06. Advertising-Publicity.
 - 07. Printing: tickets, programs.
 - 08. Telephone/Telegraph.
 - 09. Postage and office.
 - 10. Awards must be supplied in accordance with **Article 606**.
 - 11. When assigned, USA Softball Tournament Representative, who shall arrive one day prior to the scheduled opening day of the tournament, shall receive housing, local transportation and **\$125.00** per diem/per day.
 - 12. www.tournamentUSAsoftball.com

Article 604 TOURNAMENT CONTRACT. Once a bid is awarded, arrangements shall be made for the formal signing of the tournament contracts.

- A. **Awards.** All trophies and awards for National Championship Finals in accordance with **Article 606** must be purchased through the approved USA Softball awards provider.
- B. **Broadcast Rights.** The broadcast rights of all USA Softball National Championship Final games are exclusively those of USA Softball and any broadcast or rebroadcast of these games must be only with the expressed written permission of USA Softball.
- C. **Evaluated by Participating Teams.** All local associations conducting National Championship Finals shall be evaluated by the participating teams. Most recent evaluation/rating of tournament bidders shall be provided to the Council at the time of bid presentations. (Evaluation procedure shall be implemented by National Office with input from the Tournament Programs Committee).
- D. **Execution of Contract.** The USA Softball CEO shall arrange through the host and commissioner to set a meeting date for formal execution of the contract by all parties.
- E. **Field Specifications.** If awarded a National Championship Final, the host organizing committee and commissioner agree their playing fields shall conform to the specifications stated in the current USA Softball Official Playing Rules.
- F. **Financial Report.** A financial report must be filed with the National Office no later than thirty days following the completion of the National Championship Final.
- G. **National Championship Finals Entry Fee.** Each team participating in a National Championship Final shall be assessed a **\$100.00** fee (**\$25.00** for Slow Pitch and Adult Fast Pitch). The assessment shall be included in the tournament entry fee (**See Article 603**)

- H. **Tournament Site Inspection.** The CEO shall personally visit or designate a representative to inspect the tournament site and facilities prior to the execution of the contract if the site is hosting the tournament for the first time.
- I. **Souvenir Items.** A report, on the approved form, of all souvenir sales shall be required from the organizing committee of the tournament within 30 days following the completion of the tournament, which shall be accompanied by payment of the appropriate fee.
- J. **Souvenir Videos.** The selling of souvenir videos containing footage from any National Championship Finals are exclusively those of USA Softball and any broadcast or rebroadcast of these games must be only with the expressed written permission of USA Softball.
- K. **Tournament Results.** The National Championship Final's host is responsible for having an active website and updates the results on a daily basis.
- L. **Transmittal of Contract.** A copy of the tournament contract shall be forwarded to the host organizing committee and the respective commissioner from the area in advance of formal execution.

Article 605 FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS.

- A. **Bid Obligation.** Local associations awarded a regional, territorial, National Tournament or a National Championship Final must fulfill all obligations as specified in the bid.
- B. **Failure to Pay Obligation.** Failure to fulfill all obligations shall result in the suspension of the local association conducting the tournament and the local association commissioner of the area where the tournament is held.
- C. **Tournament Assessment Fees.** Each team participating in USA Softball championship play beginning at the regional level shall be assessed a **\$15.00** assessment fee to be paid to USA Softball. This shall be from all Regional, National Qualifiers and Territory Qualifier play. (See Summary of Tournament Assessment Fees).
- D. **Tournament Entry Fees & Assessments.** The following is a review of all Tournament Entry Fees in relation to Tournament Assessment Fees (See Summary of Tournament Entry Fees).

SUMMARY OF TOURNAMENT ASSESSMENT FEES PER TEAM

Article 312 (A) Regional Tournaments	\$15.00
Article 313 (B) National Qualifying Tournaments	\$15.00
Article 315 (E) National Invitational Tournaments	\$25.00
Article 603 (A) Junior Olympic Fast Pitch and Modified Pitch National Championship Finals	\$100.00
Article 603 (A) Adult Fast Pitch and Slow Pitch	\$25.00

Article 606 CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY AWARDS. Awards shall be made to teams and individuals as follows:

- A. **Regional Tournaments.** A team trophy shall be awarded to the winner and second place of a regional tournament. Individual awards are optional.
- B. **National Championship Finals.**
 - 01. **Tournament Awards.**

a. **CATEGORY I**

(06 – 16 Teams)

Teams Award
Individual Awards

First, Second and Third Place
First and Second Place –
Medallion on Ribbon

Adult Division Only:
All-American Awards
Batting Champion
Home Run Champion
MVP

First Team Only Certificates
Leading Hitter
Leading Home Run Hitter
Most Valued Player

b. **CATEGORY II**

(17 – 48 Teams)

Junior Olympic Teams Awards
Junior Olympic Individual Awards

First, Second, Third and Fourth Place
First, Second and Third Place –
Medallion on Ribbons
First, Second and Third Place
First and Second Place – Medallion on
Ribbon

Adult Teams Awards
Adult Individual Awards

Adult Division Only:
All-American Awards

Batting Champion
Home Run Champion
MVP

First Team Plaques
And Second Team Certificates
Leading Hitter
Leading Home Run Hitter
Most Valued Player

c. **CATEGORY III**

(49 – 96 Teams)

JUNIOR OLYMPIC ONLY
Team Awards

Individual Awards

First, Second, Third, and Fourth Place
and Two (2) Fifth Places
First, Second, Third and Fourth Place

d. **CATEGORY III**

(49 – and above Teams)

ADULT ONLY
Teams Awards
Individual Awards

First, Second, Third and Fourth Place
First, Second and Third Place –
Medallion on Ribbon

Adult Division Only:
All-American Awards

Batting Champion
Home Run Champion
MVP

First Team Plaques
and Second Team Certificates
Leading Hitter
Leading Home Run Hitter
Most Valued Player

e. **CATEGORY IV**

(97 – and above Teams)

JUNIOR OLYMPIC ONLY
Teams Awards

Individual Awards

First, Second, Third, Fourth, Two (2)
Fifth and Two (2) Seventh Places
First, Second, Third and Fourth Place

f. **CATEGORY V**

(Seniors Only 01 – 05 Teams)

Team Awards
Individual Awards
All-American Awards
Batting Champion
Home Run Champion

First and Second Place
Team Championship Jackets
First Team Only
Leading Hitter
Leading Home Run Hitter

EXCEPTION: No Home Run Champion will be selected in any tournament in which there is a home run limit of less than three per game. This **EXCEPTION** includes letters a, b, c, d, e and f.

02. **Individual Awards.** Individual awards shall be made to each individual whose name appears on the National Championship Final and second place roster and who is present at the tournament. The team manager and coach shall also receive an individual award.
03. **Individual Performance Awards.** Awards for individual performance other than those based on team finish, are permissible in adult divisions, but are prohibited in Junior Olympic Softball divisions.
04. **All-American Team Selection.** All-American Team Selection (The top level in all divisions of adult play).
- a. To be selected to the first or second team, a player must have participated in at least four National Championship Final games.

EXCEPTION: Pitchers must have been credited with a minimum of two victories for selection to the first team. In slow pitch tournaments with 20 - 32 teams, All-American selections must come from teams that play at least five games. In tournaments with more than 32 teams, All-American selections must come from teams that play at least six games.

- b. Positions to be selected are as follows:
- i. **Fast Pitch.** Four infielders, four outfielders, three utility players, one catcher, and three pitchers.
- ii. **Slow Pitch.** Five infielders, four outfielders, five utility players and one pitcher.
- iii. **Co-ed.** Infield: two women and two men; outfield: two women and two men; utility: two women and two men; catcher: one player, pitcher: one player.
- c. A selection committee shall be appointed by the host organizing committee with no more than five or less than three persons serving on the committee and who shall be in attendance and observe a majority of all games played during the tournament. The National Office representative shall be an active, working member of the selection committee and shall be charged with the responsibility of training the committee in their duties.
- d. The selection of players shall not be predicated on the performance of players in the championship game(s), unless the committee unanimously agrees that such consideration is necessary in order to give consideration to players in similar positions that cannot be chosen on the basis of performance in games prior to the championship game(s).

- e. Individual awards shall be presented to each player selected to the All- American first team. Players selected to the second team shall receive an engraved certificate from USA Softball.
05. **All-Tournament Team Selection.** An All-Tournament Team will be selected (Adult Divisions and Classifications not covered under **Article 606**.
- a. To be selected to the first team or second team, a player must have participated in at least four (4) National Championship Final games.

EXCEPTION: Pitchers must have been credited with a minimum of two victories for selection to the first team. In slow pitch tournaments with 20 - 32 teams, All-Tournament selections must come from teams that played at least five (5) games. In tournaments with more than thirty-two (32) teams, All-Tournament selections must come from teams that play at least six (6) games.

- b. Positions to be selected are as follows:
 - i. **Fast Pitch.** Four infielders, four outfielders, three utility players, one catcher and three pitchers shall be selected.
 - ii. **Slow Pitch.** Five infielders, four outfielders, five utility players and one pitcher shall be selected.
 - iii. **Co-ed.** Infield: two men and two women; Outfield: two men and two women; Utility: two men and two women; Catcher: one player; Pitcher: one player.
- c. A selection committee shall be constituted by the host organizing committee with no more than five or less than three persons serving on the committee. The committee shall be in attendance and observe a majority of all games played during the tournament. The USA Softball National Office representative shall be an active, working member of the selection committee and shall be charged with the responsibility of training the committee in their duties.
- d. The selection of players shall not be predicated on the performance of players in the championship game(s), unless the committee unanimously agrees that such consideration is necessary in order to give consideration to players in similar positions that cannot be chosen on the basis of performance in games prior to the championship games(s).
- e. Individual awards shall be presented to each player selected to the All-Tournament team.

EXCEPTION: No All – Tournament Team selected for the Men’s Class D and Class E/Rec Slow Pitch.

06. **Batting Champion.** A batting champion shall be determined at the National Championship Final on the basis of the highest on-base percentage based on appearing at bat at least 15 plate appearances in the fast pitch National Championship Final and 15 plate appearances in the slow pitch National Championship Final.
- a. Masters fast pitch batting champion shall be based on the highest percentage from 12 appearances.

- b. Any player having participated in at least four complete games shall be eligible to be batting champion, if their number of hits would have been sufficient to give them the highest batting average and had they had 15 total appearances.
- c. In the Co-ed division, two batting champions shall be named – one woman and one man.
- d. Masters and Seniors Slow Pitch Divisions. The batting champion shall be based on the highest percentage from 15 appearances in tournaments with less than 24 teams.

EXCEPTION: No Batting Champion will be selected for the Men's Class D or Men's Class E/Rec Slow Pitch

EXCEPTION: Men's Fast Pitch & Men's Modified Pitch

- 07. Batters are to be credited with a home run for each four-base award.
- 08. A home run champion shall not be selected in any tournament in which there is a home run limit of less than three.
- 09. Men's Major Fast Pitch. Additional individual awards are as follows:
 - a. Most Valuable Player
 - b. Herb Dudley – Most Valuable Pitcher
- 10. All trophies and awards for National Championship Finals in accordance with **Article 606** must be purchased through the approved USA Softball awards provider.
- 11. The costs of all awards shall be borne by the tournament sponsor.

EXCEPTION: The National Office shall provide jackets in accordance with **Article 606**.

- 12. Selection of all trophies shall be made by the Board of Directors.
- C. **Unauthorized Awards.** At no time shall unauthorized awards be presented including merchandise awards that can be converted into money by the recipients.
- D. **Sponsors.** There shall be no advertising or sponsor names or logos on any National Championship team or individual awards.

Article 607 TOURNAMENT REPORTS.

- A. **Local Association Championship.** The association commissioner at the conclusion of the tournament shall:
 - 01. File with the respective National Championship Final organizing committee:
 - a. The name of the winning team.
 - b. The roster/affidavit form(s) and team entry form(s) of the advancing team(s).
 - 02. File with the national office a completed official tournament bracket.
 - 03. File the bracket and game scores with the local commissioner sending teams to the tournament.
- B. **National Qualifiers.** The association host commissioner at the conclusion of the tournament shall:
 - 01. File with the respective National Championship Final organizing committee:
 - a. The name of the winning team.
 - b. The roster/affidavit form(s) and team entry form(s) of the advancing team(s).

02. File with the national office:
 - a. The completed official tournament bracket.
 - b. The official entry fees and assessment reporting forms, together with payment.
 03. File the bracket and game scores with the local commissioner sending teams to the tournament.
- C. **Regional Championships.** The association host commissioner at the conclusion of the tournament shall:
01. File with the National Championship Final organizing committee:
 - a. The name of the winning team.
 - b. The roster/affidavit form(s) and team entry form(s) of the advancing team(s).
 02. File with the national office:
 - a. The completed official tournament bracket.
 - b. The official entry fees and assessment reporting forms, together with the payment.
 03. File the bracket and game scores with the local commissioner sending teams to the tournament.
- D. **Territory Qualifiers.** At the conclusion of the tournament, the tournament director shall file with the National Office:
01. The listing of the official order of finish within 24 hours of the completion of the tournament.
 02. The official entry fees and assessment reporting forms, together with the payment.
- E. **National Championship Finals.** The organizing committee, at the conclusion of the tournament, is responsible to file the following with the National Office:
01. Listing of official post tournament fact sheet within 24 hours after conclusion of championship play; also, official order of finish and tournament brackets are to be completed on TournamentUSASoftball.com, which can be accessed by national office online.
 02. Listing of first and second All-American/All-Tournament teams (adult divisions only) within 24 hours after conclusion of championship play.
 03. Photographs, including at least six action photos and team pictures of the champion within 30 days after conclusion of championship play.
 04. File the official entry fees and assessment reporting forms, together with the payment within 30 days after completion of tournament.
 05. The tournament organizing committee shall keep copies of score sheets for each tournament game a period of three months by the tournament organizing committee.
 06. Any statistics used for selection of All-American teams shall be copied and sent to the 10 regional directors for use in classification matters.
 07. The following evaluation forms are required to be submitted within thirty (30) days after the tournament:
 - a. USA Softball Tournament Representative.
 - b. Umpire-In-Chief.
 - c. Tournament Director.
 08. The National Championship Income Statement (tournament budget) is required to be submitted within thirty (30) days after the tournament.
- F. **National Office Reports.** The National Office shall publish the standings of all national championship finals indicating those teams that are subject to the Mandatory Classification Rule.