

Official Senior Softball-USA Rulebook

Changes approved for 2021:

- **Erasing the batter's box:** A two-step penalty has been implemented for intentionally erasing any portion of the batter's box. Previously, the act resulted in an ejection. Going forward, it will be an out for the first offense and an inning-ending out for the second offense involving the same team in the same game. If the person who erases the box (such as a manager or a catcher) is not due to bat next, the next batter for that team will be declared out.
- **Mercy rule:** Previously, only Major Plus divisions aged 40+ through 70+ had a mercy rule. That rule remains the same (15 runs after five innings, or 22 runs after four innings). Now, the AA, AAA and Major divisions and older Major Plus divisions will have a mercy rule of 15 runs after five innings or 20 runs after four innings.
- **Equalizers:** Teams once again may waive receipt of an equalizer, which allows them to have a coin flip to determine home team. (Equalizers were mandatory last year.)
- **Championship game times:** For the first time, championship games will have an 80-minute time limit (plus the open inning). The reasoning: Some championship games have lasted more than two hours. With an 80-minute time limit, teams that hustle still should be able to play a full seven innings.
- **Obstruction:** Defenders no longer can block a base legally while waiting on a throw to arrive. Now, to avoid being called for obstruction for impeding a runner legally running the bases, a defender must have possession of the ball or be in the act of fielding a batted ball. This should help reduce collisions at the bases.
- **U.S. National Championship games and World Masters seeding:** A little background here: Teams that win their divisions in the Eastern Nationals or Western Nationals earn the right to play for the U.S. National Championship in pool play during the World Masters in Las Vegas. The winner of that game earns the No. 1 seed at the World Masters, and the loser is the No. 2 seed. However, if an Eastern champion or Western champion had no opponent to play for the National Championship, that team previously had to earn its seeding traditionally during pool play. To reward teams for playing in and winning the Easterns or Westerns, a team with no opponent for the U.S. National Championship will automatically be seeded No. 2 unless the team earns the No. 1 seed through pool play.