

Worn \ Abused \ Damaged \ Foreign Substance Bats Not Allowed In USSSA Sanctioned Play

While unlike most organized baseball sanctioning bodies, USSSA has chosen to grandfather the use of current composite softball and baseball bats for at least the 2011 season and in the case of softball bats through the 2012 season. This does not change the fact that such bats may become too soft with excess use, abuse or damage. As such, USSSA has asked its umpires to be more vigilant in removing worn bats, abused bats, damaged bats and bats with foreign substances on the barrel / taper from play.

No bat should be allowed in USSSA sanctioned play, if it is damaged in any way. Damaged bats include those with damage to the knob or end cap, those which have loose knobs or end caps, and those with cracks or dents in the bat material. For example, if the end cap is in any way is loose or appears damaged; the bats should be removed from play for being a damaged bat. If an end plug has come out or the knob has come off, the only way such bat is legal in USSSA play, is if the knob or end cap is replaced by the manufacture. Replacement by anyone else results in an altered bat with potential suspension for the owner/user of the bat.

No bat should be allowed in USSSA sanctioned play, if any of the graphics of the bat have worn off. For example, even if the only graphics that have worn off are not Key Graphic Information and are only items such as the patent no., a mere manufacture logo, or the approval mark of another association, the bat should be removed for being too worn.

No bat should be allowed in USSSA sanctioned play, if the paint has been worn through and the actual bat material is showing. For example, if at the end of the barrel next to the taper where there are no graphics the bat paint is worn off and the underlying bat material is exposed, that bat should be removed from play for being too worn.

No bat should be allowed in USSSA sanctioned play, if there is a foreign substance on the barrel or taper of a baseball or softball bat. Foreign substances included among other substances, pine tar, stickem-type products and even dirt or mud, but only if the substance adds to the thickness of the barrel or covers Key Graphics Information such as USSSA 1.20 BPF mark, the serial number of the bat, the model or manufacture name, official softball, etc.. Players are responsible for their equipment and must clean such substances off of their bats so that the substance does not add to the thickness of the bat or obscure any Key Graphics Information about that bat. For example, while pine tar is allowed on the grip, if it makes its way even to the taper adding to the thickness of the bat barrel, the bat must be removed from the game until the foreign substance has been removed from the taper and barrel areas of the bat. Or for example, while bats will surely get dirt on them under normal use, if the dirt obscures graphics which contain Key Graphic Information, such bats cannot be used in USSSA play until the dirt has been removed to the extent necessary to make all such Key Graphic Information readable. If Key Graphic Information about a bat cannot be read, the bat should not be used in USSSA Play.

If any removed bat under these rules is brought back into play at any USSSA sanctioned event at any time, the owner and user of such bat may be suspended for up to one year for unsportsmanlike conduct. And if the foreign substance or the wear/abuse/damage is apparent enough that the batter should have been aware of it, the batter may be so suspended for bringing such a bat into the batter's box without having been warned in advance. Players are responsible for their equipment and must not use equipment that is even potentially illegal for use in USSSA sanctioned play.

In addition to the player being suspended for unsportsmanlike conduct, coaches of youth teams may also be so suspended when their players attempt to bat with such bats. Also, coaches of adult teams which have multiple offenses under this rule may also be so suspended for failing to have his team follow USSSA equipment rules. Please be reminded that unsportsmanlike conduct can result in a game or tournament suspensions in the discretion of the umpire/tournament director and up to a year suspension in the discretion of the state director.

Softball Bat Standards Announcement

USSSA has a long history with 1.20 BPF standard developed on principals of physics by Dr. Richard Brandt of NYU. While the current standard of 1.20 PF for softball bats remains in our view the appropriate level for competition, the current generation of composite bats is susceptible to alteration and improvement with overuse. As such, USSSA attempted to address the issue by providing stiff penalties for those who use altered bats and is attempting to help develop an on field testing device to determine when bats might through overuse or alteration exceed 1.20 BPF standards. In addition, USSSA has reduce the compression (that is hardness of the ball) used in slow pitch from at one time in excess of 700# to 325# for today's balls. And lastly, USSSA has reduced the weight of the ball, again in an attempt to maintain the proper competitive level of play. With all of that done, USSSA still finds the possibility of altered an overused composite bats to be concern.

Accordingly, beginning of 2011, USSSA revamp its 1.20 BPF testing procedures to reduce the possibility of improved performance of carbon fiber bats with overuse or alteration while maintaining the 1.20 BPF standards. Bats passing the new test will carry a new and easily identifiable USSSA mark on the taper of all USSSA licensed bats. Old bats with the old USSSA BPF Mark currently are expected to grandfathered through the end of the 2012 season. Additionally, USSSA softball bats with the new Mark are not currently expected to be available until late fall 2011.

This announcement is effective as of the issue date of October 19, 2010