



of Sacramento

# USA Softball of Sacramento

## Junior Olympic Rules & Regulations



## 2025-2026 Season

September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026

Welcome to USA Softball of Sacramento!

We're proud to be part of USA Softball, the National Governing Body of softball in the U.S., and we're here to promote fair play, uphold the sport's values, and create opportunities for everyone passionate about softball.

As a non-profit, we're powered by dedicated staff and volunteers committed to growing the game. Our Junior Olympic Program is one of the largest in the nation, designed to help young athletes develop skills, build confidence, and thrive in a supportive environment.

From recreational leagues to competitive fastpitch, we aim to create meaningful experiences for players, parents, and coaches. With resources like our Annual Coaching Clinics and SoftBok Training Program, we also help coaches make a lasting impact.

Here's what you can expect when you join our Junior Olympic Program:

- Professional, highly trained umpires
- Organized local support and administration
- Comprehensive insurance coverage
- Options for both recreational and competitive play

We're excited to have you with us for the 2025-2026 season—let's make it a great one!

Best regards,  
Karla Burket  
Junior Olympic Commissioner

*DISCLAIMER*

*The USA Softball of Sacramento 2025-2026 Junior Olympic Rules and Regulations (Yellow Book) is effective September 1, 2025. Updates may be made, so please refer to the official version at [www.usasoftballsacramento.org](http://www.usasoftballsacramento.org). In case of discrepancies, the online version prevails over printed or other communicated information. USA Softball of Sacramento reserves the right to act in the program's best interest, within the Pacific Coast Region and National USA Softball Rules.*

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## Board of Directors

Commissioner

Jeff Morrow

6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3

Citrus Heights, CA 95621

916-496-1891

[jm@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:jm@usasoftballsacramento.org)

Junior Olympic Commissioner

Karla Burket

6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3

Citrus Heights, Ca 95621

916-622-9060

[karla@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:karla@usasoftballsacramento.org)

Player Representative

Sheri Jenkins

6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3

Citrus Heights, CA 95621

530-306-9016

[sheri@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:sheri@usasoftballsacramento.org)

President

Jerry Fisher

6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3

Citrus Heights, CA 95621

530-306-9016

[Info@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:Info@usasoftballsacramento.org)

Special Advisor

Jeff Dubchansky

6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3

Citrus Heights, CA 95621

916-521-7574

[jd@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:jd@usasoftballsacramento.org)

Secretary

Lori Conrad

6380 Tupelo Dr, Suite 3

Citrus Heights, Ca 95621

530-601-0032

[lori@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:lori@usasoftballsacramento.org)

Umpire-In-Chief

Chuck Brabec

6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3

Citrus Heights, CA 95621

916-834-8074

[uic@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:uic@usasoftballsacramento.org)

## Youth Program Contacts

### Junior Olympic Commissioner

Karla Burket  
6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3  
Citrus Heights, CA 95621  
916-622-9060  
[karla@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:karla@usasoftballsacramento.org)

### Select Program Coordinator

Tracey Levea  
6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3  
Citrus Heights, Ca 95621  
916-261-1566  
[tracey@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:tracey@usasoftballsacramento.org)

### Player Representative

Sheri Jenkins  
6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3  
Citrus Heights, CA 95621  
530-306-9016  
[sheri@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:sheri@usasoftballsacramento.org)

### Tournament Director

Cat Carrisosa  
6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3  
Citrus Heights, CA 95621  
408-431-6559  
[cat@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:cat@usasoftballsacramento.org)

### League Coordinator

Karla Burket  
6380 Tupelo Drive, Suite 3  
Citrus Heights, CA 95621  
916-622-9060  
[karla@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:karla@usasoftballsacramento.org)

### Coaches Training Coordinator

Darin Delgado  
6380 Tupelo Dr, Suite 3  
Citrus Heights, Ca 95621  
916-717-4490  
[darin@usasoftballsacramento.org](mailto:darin@usasoftballsacramento.org)

## Mission

The mission of USA Softball of Sacramento is to foster, develop, promote, and regulate the sport of softball within the Greater Sacramento area through a standardized, quality program that is consistent with USA Softball.

The specific purpose of the USA Softball of Sacramento Junior Olympic (JO) Program is to:

- Promote the game of amateur softball to all persons throughout the Greater Sacramento footprint regardless of race, color of skin, creed, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, or ancestry.
- Provide safeguards in accordance with the spirit of true sportsmanship.
- Establish and publish standardized rules, regulations, and guidelines that all may follow.
- Organize, promote, and conduct clinics and seminars for players, teams, leagues, umpires, and others regarding the proper skills of softball play and the rules of the game.
- Schedule, promote and conduct well organized annual softball championship play as well as other tournaments.
- Provide a standard and consistent avenue for USA Softball of Sacramento teams to qualify for National Championships.
- Provide scholarships which present more young persons the opportunity for advanced education.
- Assist international softball teams while in Sacramento as requested by the USA Softball National Office.



## USA Softball Overview

Teams affiliated with USA Softball of Sacramento are a vital part of the National Governing Body of Softball of the United States. As such, the teams enjoy the following:

**Governing Body of Softball:** USA Softball is the National Governing Body (NGB) of Softball in the United States as approved by the U.S. Congress and accepted by the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) and the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC). As the NGB USA Softball is the only softball organization authorized to represent the United States of America in the sport of softball.

**Standard Eligibility and Playing Rules:** All USA Softball registered teams throughout our country are governed by the same basic eligibility and playing rules, thus ensuring fair competition in Championship Play. Player eligibility is governed by the USA Softball Code and Procedural Manual. The Pacific Coast Region and USA Softball of Sacramento have additional eligibility requirements which are further defined in this publication.

**Team Classification:** USA Softball of Sacramento has a classification code to help ensure that teams and players with dominant softball playing ability do not play in lower classifications. However, teams and players may request reclassification for eligibility to compete in a lower classification.  
Championship Play.

**Championship Play:** may be scheduled for the following classifications: Gold, "A", "B" and "C" in the Age Classifications of 18u, 16u, 14u, 12u, 10u, 8u.

**Junior Olympic Age Classification:** The age cutoff date is August 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. Please see the Junior Olympic Age Qualification Chart (Appendix E).

**Gold Classification (Travel):** Gold Classification is only available in the 16u and 18u age divisions. The Gold classification includes the most advanced Junior Olympic fastpitch players and teams. Teams at this level have competed and qualified for advancement to the Gold USA National Championship.

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“A” Classification (Travel): This is an open level of play and can be highly competitive with most players having consistent ability and pitchers can control a game. Qualifying teams at this level advance to the USA Softball “A” National Championship or to the Western USA Softball “A” National Championship in their respective age classification.

“B” Classification (Select / All-Stars): This level of play is for recreation leagues. Only USA Softball approved recreation league teams, league All-Star teams or Select teams are eligible to participate in these championships.

“C” Classification (All-Stars): This classification is for recreation leagues only and is explicitly for less competitive leagues. The “C” classification has been established to afford meaningful competition for leagues and teams that are unable to compete in the “B” classification because of the size of the league and/or the level of softball skills. Only league teams or league All-Star teams are eligible to participate in these championships.

## Standards of Conduct

Standards of Conduct are part of the USA Softball bylaws. All USA Softball members shall respect these standards. A manager, coach, player, or other volunteer affiliated with a team shall not violate any of the following:

- Commission of acts that are contrary to the objectives and purposes of the local association or of USA Softball.
- Violation of state or local laws.
- Failure to pay fees or indebtedness due to the local association.
- Destruction of property.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Engaging in physical violence, such as an attack on an umpire, competition/tournament official or participant immediately preceding, during or immediately following a game or arising out of USA Softball activities.
- Commission of fraud, such as playing under an assumed name, falsifying an affidavit or roster or giving false information to competition/tournament officials.
- Participation in a competition/tournament when not meeting eligibility requirements.
- Knowingly competing with or against individuals or teams which are suspended from USA Softball activities.
- Forfeiture of a game in championship play.
- Violation of USA Softball substance abuse policies and procedures.
- Bullying, hazing, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, harassment.
- Interference with any hearing process of USA Softball or any local association.
- Misconduct that reasonably calls into question the member or participant's suitability to participate in the applicable activity.

Violation of any of the above items may result in a team and/or individual suspension, or other appropriate disciplinary action.

## Staff Responsibilities

The positions outlined below have certain responsibilities to USA Softball and are summarized below:

### Junior Olympic Commissioner

- The Junior Olympic Commissioner has the ultimate responsibility to verify the classification and eligibility of all teams wishing to participate in any USA Softball event to the best of their ability.
- The Junior Olympic Commissioner retains the right to reclassify any team based on their best judgement.
- The Junior Olympic Commissioner retains the right to make any decisions they deem is in the best interest of the Junior Olympic Program.

### League President

- The President of each recreational league is responsible for knowing and understanding the rules and policies of USA Softball.
- The President of each recreational league is responsible for verifying the league's player and team eligibility to the best of their ability.
- The President of each recreational league shall notify the local Junior Olympic Commissioner of any possible infractions.

### Team Manager

- The team manager of each team participating in championship play is responsible for knowing and understanding the rules and policies of USA Softball.
- The team manager is responsible for verifying the team and player's eligibility to the best of their knowledge.
- The team manager shall be prepared to provide proof of registration, insurance and age for every player on their team at any time.
- The team manager shall ensure that everyone associated with the team follows all rules and procedures set forth by USA Softball.
- The team manager shall sign the Official Championship Roster confirming the eligibility of their players.

# General Travel Team Policies

## Seasons of Play

The USA Softball youth registration period begins September 1<sup>st</sup> and continues through August 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Travel teams operate on a yearly basis under this playing season.

## Registration Requirements

All travel teams sanctioned with USA Softball agree to be bound by the rules and regulations of USA Softball, USA Softball Pacific Coast Region and USA Softball of Sacramento.

- a. Each player shall be individually registered or team registered as determined appropriate by the Junior Olympic Commissioner.
- b. All team staff and board members involved with the team must be USA Softball background checked and Safesport certified.
- c. The team manager shall testify to all eligibility and responsibility requirements as outlined in this document.

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of a USA Softball Class A/Gold Program is to provide a competitive tournament system designed to develop softball players to build their skills and excel at their highest desired level of competition.

### 2. Eligibility

Teams must conform to the following definitions:

- a. A team must register with the local association in which the greatest numbers of its players reside, and this number must be retained for the remainder of the season except where allowed by the USA Softball Code.

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- b. A player may play in any association during the calendar year.
- c. A player may participate as a regular rostered player on only one team during championship play.
- d. A player may participate with multiple teams during a season. However, players may play on only one team per tournament.
- e. USA Softball offers Class A divisions for 10u, 12u, 14u, 16u, 18u or a modified version thereof approved by the local USA Softball Association.
- f. USA Softball offers Gold divisions for 16u and 18u only.
- g. All players and team staff on the team must be USA Softball registered.
- h. All adult team staff must be USA Softball background checked and Safesport certified.

### 3. Classification

All teams in the travel program will follow the classification procedures as outlined below.

- a. All teams in the travel program are classified as A.
- b. USA Softball offers Gold divisions for the 16u and 18u divisions and teams must qualify for Gold by qualifying through one of the qualifying tournaments.

### 4. Participation

Teams must conform to the following participation requirements in order to remain eligible for the A program.

- a. Teams may participate in any USA Softball sanctioned A tournament.
- b. Teams may participate in any USA Softball sanctioned Gold tournament.
- c. Teams may participate in any other association sanctioned tournament.
- d. Teams may not participate in USA Softball sanctioned B or C tournaments.

### 5. Championship Play

Teams may choose to enter championship play to represent their team with the intent to move forward to the next level of competition if so qualified.

- a. Teams are eligible to participate in the A Association Championships. Teams finishing in a qualifying position will advance to one of the following:
  - i. USA Softball National Championship Finals
  - ii. USA Softball Western National Championships
- b. Teams are eligible to participate in national qualifying tournaments to earn a spot to Nationals outside their local qualifying process. Teams finishing in a qualifying position will advance to the USA Softball Nationals.

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- c. Teams are eligible to participate in Gold qualifying tournaments to earn a Gold designation/berth. Teams finishing in a qualifying position will advance to the USA Softball Gold Nationals.
- d. Teams attending Regionals, Western Nationals or Nationals are allowed three pick-up players as defined by the USA Softball Code (see Pick-Up Player section)

### Travel Team FAQ

Q. How do I register with USA Softball?

A. You can register with USA Softball by going to [www.usasoftballsacramento.org](http://www.usasoftballsacramento.org) and following the prompts to register your team or you can reach out to the Junior Olympic Commissioner for assistance.

Q. Why should my team register with USA Softball?

A. USA Softball is the National Governing Body of softball in the United States. As such, the membership has access to many benefits on the local, regional and national level. Additionally, the insurance USA Softball provides is the best in the business and covers your team across any sanction you may choose to play.

Q. How does a team qualify for the USA Softball Western National Championship or National Championship Finals?

A. A team must play in the current year USA Softball of Sacramento Association Championship in its age classification.

Q. Can a manager, coach, player, or parent of one team communicate with a player who is committed to another team?

A. Personal communications amongst friends is acceptable and encouraged, however the recruitment and/or enticement of a player or parent while they are committed to another team is discouraged.

Q. My team isn't very good, can we play in the "B" classification tournaments?

A. Only teams affiliated with an approved USA Softball recreational league are eligible to participate in the Class B program. Teams must adhere to all eligibility standards for the B program.

Q. Can my team play in events outside USA Softball?

A. Yes, travel teams are an open division and may compete in any other sanction as desired. Your USA Softball insurance coverage follows your team wherever you play.

Q. Can I have players guest play on my team?

A. Yes, just make sure you add them to [www.usasoftballsacramento.org](http://www.usasoftballsacramento.org) on your team account for the time period they are playing. It is okay for them to be listed on more than one roster, but they can only participate with one team in our events on a given weekend. Also, please note that ANY player participating in a recreational league program CANNOT guest play with your team after March 15<sup>th</sup> or they will lose their eligibility for their Select or All-star team.

# General Recreational League Policies

## Seasons of Play

The USA Softball youth registration period begins September 1<sup>st</sup> and continues through August 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

- a. Fall season typically runs late August through November. Recreational leagues can run internal programs or interleague with other USA Softball approved recreational leagues. If members of NorCal, leagues can participate in the NorCal Fall Ball program.
- b. The Spring season typically runs from the middle of February through late May. Recreational leagues can run internal programs or interleague with other USA Softball approved recreational leagues.
- c. The Summer season typically runs late May through the end of July. Recreational leagues can submit their teams for participation in the All-Star tournament program.

*Eligibility resets happen for USA Softball of Sacramento on January 1<sup>st</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> each year. \**

*\*If your league is a member of NorCal Girls Softball, Fall Ball eligibility is determined by their Board of Directors and you must follow any applicable rules.*

## Registration Requirements

All recreational softball leagues sanctioned with USA Softball agree to be bound by the rules and regulations of USA Softball, USA Softball Pacific Coast Region and USA Softball of Sacramento.

- a. All teams involved with the organization must be approved by the league Board of Directors.
- b. All players involved with the organization will be registered and insured with USA Softball.
- c. All team staff and board members involved with the organization must be USA Softball background checked and Safesport certified.
- d. All members must follow the USA Softball Code of Conduct.
- e. The league President shall testify to all eligibility and responsibility requirements as outlined in this document.

## RECREATIONAL LEAGUES

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of a USA Softball recreational league is to provide a local community with an organized softball program open to any interested player. This is a recreation-based program designed to encourage participation and provide an introduction to the game of softball. All leagues must be approved by USA Softball of Sacramento.

### 2. Eligibility

Recreational leagues must conform to the following:

- a. An organized league that is associated with a recognized neighborhood or community with defined and approved boundaries where participation is open to any interested youth.\*
- b. Participation is open to any interested youth.
- c. Tryouts or demonstration of skills is not required for participation.
- d. Leagues must use a draft, draw or other acceptable and approved method to ensure a distribution of talent among all the recreational league teams.
- e. Leagues may offer playing divisions for 6u, 8u, 10u, 12u, 14u, 16u, 18u or a modified version thereof approved by the local USA Softball association.
- f. Leagues must include a minimum of 4 teams within the same age classification or be approved by the local USA Softball association.

*\*Players must LIVE or GO TO SCHOOL within the defined boundary of that league. League boundaries are determined by USA Softball of Sacramento. For leagues who choose to be members of NorCal Girls Softball, the league boundaries will be managed by the NorCal Commissioner as determined by the USA Softball of Sacramento Commissioner. Out-of-boundary waiver requests are available in certain situations.*

### 3. Classification

All teams out of the recreational league program will be classified as Class B Rec regardless of league size.

### 4. Participation

Teams must conform to the following participation requirements in order to remain in Good Standing:

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- a. Teams shall only play against other USA Softball approved recreational league teams. No participation with any outside organization including Little League, Pony, Etc.

### SELECT PROGRAM (CLASS B)

#### a. Purpose

The purpose of the Select (Class B) Program is to establish an opportunity for teams to play competitive softball while remaining with their recreational league. The Select program is still a recreation based program and must be managed by an approved Recreational league. Each association must run and administer their select program through the association.

#### b. Eligibility

c.

Teams must conform to ALL of the following definitions of eligibility in order to be eligible.

- a. The team must be approved by and represent an approved single Recreational League.
- b. The team must have some form of try-outs or demonstration of skill that is announced to the entire league membership.
- c. Any league player that participates with any other team outside of their recreational league OR Select team after March 1st forfeits their eligibility for Select. Players can appeal their eligibility to the JO Commissioner.
- d. The team must represent a specific age division of 10 & Under, 12 & Under, or 14 & Under.
- e. In the 14 & Under division, high school players are eligible to return to the league that they participated in during the previous calendar year ONLY if no existing league player is removed from the team.
- f. The team must follow all requirements outlined in the PARTICIPATION portion of this document.
- g. Select teams and all activities must be approved by the league Board of Directors.
- h. Select teams must participate in the USA Softball of Sacramento Spring Select program.
- i. Grandfather Clause: Players who have played in a league under an approved waiver and have established themselves with that league through at least 2 full Spring season shall be considered eligible for Select in the league they are waived to play in. Leagues will be required to complete a Select waiver for the player, as well as the league/NorCal waiver that is required each year.
- j. If a league fields two Select teams within a division, at least 50% of the total Select players must also be active participants on a Rec team. The second team must be approved by the Junior Olympic Commissioner.
- k.
- l. The team must follow all requirements outlined in the PARTICIPATION portion of this document.

\* USA Softball of Sacramento reserves the right to grant waivers in the Select program for special circumstances in a limited capacity.

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\*\* “Participate” is defined as a player or team taking part in a tryout, workout, practice, practice game, scheduled game, friendly or tournament.

## **d. Classification**

All teams in the Select Program will be classified as USA Softball B teams regardless of league size. Teams may request reclassification to their Junior Olympic Commissioner.

## **e. Participation**

Teams must conform to the following participation requirements in order to remain eligible for the Select Program.

- a. Teams may participate in any USA Softball Sanctioned B Tournament.
- b. Teams may participate in any USA Softball Sanctioned A Tournament with the risk of being reclassified with approval of the JO Commissioner.

## **f. Championship Play**

Teams may choose to enter Championship Play to represent their League with the intent to move forward to the next level of competition if so qualified.

- a. Teams are eligible to participate in the B Association Championships or State Tournament (as determined by your local USA Softball Association). Teams finishing in a qualifying position will advance to the Class B Western National Championship.
- b. Teams attending the Class B Western National Championship are allowed 3 pick-up players as defined by the USA Softball Code (see Pick-Up Player Section).
- c. Teams that place in the top 2 of their division in the Association Championship will earn a berth to a post-season championship tournament and are expected to attend. Please communicate this to your families and begin fundraising efforts as soon as possible to prepare for the opportunity.

## ALL-STAR PROGRAM - CLASS B and C

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the All-Star program is to provide an opportunity for the league to designate stand out players to represent their league in a summer tournament program.

### 2. Eligibility

All-Star teams must conform to the following definitions of eligibility in order to be eligible for the All- Star program.

- a. The team must be approved by and represent an approved single recreational league OR follow the guidelines as needed for Interleague All-Stars (see below).
- b. The team must select players through an approved All-Star selection process as defined in the league's operating policies that is not in violation with any USA Softball rules.
- c. All players must live or go to school within the approved boundaries of the league or have a waiver on file with USA Softball.
- d. The team must represent a specific age division including 8u, 10u, 12u, 14u, 16u, 18u. e. All players must have participated in the league the current calendar year.
- e. Any player that participates\*\* with any other team outside of the recreational league after March 15<sup>th</sup> forfeits their eligibility for All-Stars.
- f. Teams may not have more than four (4) players who have participated on any team outside of their recreational league after January 1st of the current season.
- g. The All-Star team shall not try-out, select, announce, practice, meet, or play together before the last Saturday in April.
- h. If the league selects a single league team, this team must meet the requirements above in which the league uses a fair distribution of talent.

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- i. High school players are eligible to return to the league that they participated in during the previous calendar year. Teams may not have more than five (5) high school players on their roster.
- j. A player playing in more than one USA Softball recreation league during the spring season must declare in writing by March 15 to both leagues which league she intends to tryout for All-Stars in. Players are only eligible to tryout for All-Stars in one league.
- k. All-Star teams and all activities must be approved by the league Board of Directors.
- l. The team must follow all requirements outlined in the PARTICIPATION portion of this document.

*\*\* “Participate” is defined as a player or team taking part in a tryout, workout, practice, practice game, scheduled game, friendly or tournament.*

### 3. Classification

All teams in the All-Star program are classified as B teams. The JO Commissioner is responsible for re-classifying teams to the “C” classification if they cannot compete at the B level. Leagues must request reclassification prior to the start of All Star season to be eligible.

### 4. Participation

Teams must conform to the following participation requirements in order to remain eligible for the All-Star program.

- a. Teams may set up friendlies or scrimmages with other approved All-Star teams.
- b. Teams may participate in any USA Softball Sanctioned B or C tournament as determined by the team’s classification.
- c. Teams may participate in any USA Softball sanctioned A tournament or scrimmage against USA Softball “A” teams with permission by the USA Softball JO Commissioner. This carries the risk of being reclassified.
- d. Teams may not participate in any other sanctioned (or unsanctioned) event outside of USA Softball.

### 5. Championship Play

Teams may choose to enter championship play to represent their league with the intent to move forward to the next level of competition if so qualified.

- a. Teams are eligible to participate in the Association Championships. Teams finishing in a qualifying position will advance to the Class B Western National Championship or the Class C State Games accordingly.

- b. Teams attending Nationals or State Games are allowed 3 pick-up players as defined by the USA Softball Code (see Pick-Up Player section).

## INTERLEAGUE ALL-STAR PROGRAM

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Interleague All-Star Program is to assist the small leagues that do not have enough willing players to create an All-Star team to compete in USA Softball's championship play season.

### 2. Eligibility

Interleague All-Star teams must conform to the following definitions of eligibility in addition to the eligibility requirements for the All-Star program as listed above.

- a. All interleague All-Star play is subject to sanctioning by the local USA Softball association.
- b. Interleague teams must compete in an approved interleague schedule during the regular season to be eligible for interleague All-Stars.
- c. Eligible inter-leagues must have an open and announced selection process with participants recorded.
- d. Leagues participating in interleague play having sufficient players to form their own All-Star team cannot participate in interleague All-Stars.
- e. No more than two (2) leagues may combine to form an All-Star team.
- f. No player from either league interested in participating on the combined All-Star team shall be denied the opportunity to participate.
- g. Combined teams must be approved by both leagues' Board of Directors.

### 3. Classification

All teams in the Interleague All-Star program must adhere to the classification guidelines as outlined in the All-Star Classification section.

### 4. Participation

All teams in the Interleague All-Star program must adhere to the participation guidelines as outlined in the All-Star Participation section.

### 5. Championship Play

All teams in the Interleague All-Star program must adhere to the Championship Play guidelines as outlined in the All-Star Championship Play section.

## RURAL TEAMS (remotely located teams)

### 1. Team Eligibility

- a. Includes 8u, 10u, 12u, 14u, 16u or 18u.
- b. Team must be currently registered with USA Softball.
- c. Players on the team must be residents of a single community/geographical area that is located a minimum of twenty-five (25) miles from the nearest USA Softball recreational league in which they are eligible to participate.

### 2. Player Eligibility

See General All-Star Policies and Procedures.

### 3. Classification

All teams are initially classified as “B” unless requested otherwise from the Junior Olympic Commissioner.

### 4. Participation

All teams must adhere to the participation guidelines as outlined in the All-Star Participation section.

### 5. Championship Play

All teams must adhere to the Championship Play guidelines as outlined in the All-Star Championship Play section.

## HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the High School Division is to provide competition and championship tournaments for players who are not of the Junior Olympic “A” caliber. It provides a post California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) summer program that addresses the needs of players who are of high school age and wish to increase their skill to benefit their league, their high school team, and themselves.

### 2. Team Eligibility

- a. Teams may not tryout, practice or participate together before the last Saturday in April.
- b. Individual players who participate on a travel team after March 15<sup>th</sup> of the current season are not eligible to participate.

### 3. Classification

All teams in the High School Division program must request their “B” classification from the JO Commissioner.

### 4. Participation

All teams in the High School Division program must adhere to the participation guidelines as outlined in the All-Star Participation section with the following exceptions.

- a. Teams are eligible to participate in Class A or Gold invitational tournaments during the season but may be reclassified by the JO Commissioner based on performance
- b. Teams that participate in A National Qualifying events will NOT be eligible to participate in High School Division Championship tournaments.

### 5. Championship Play

All teams in the High School Division program must adhere to the Championship Play guidelines as outlined in the All-Star Championship Play section.



## Recreational League Championship Play

### Class B

Association Championships 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U -July 19-21  
10U Western Nationals – July 27 – August 2 - Salem OR  
12U Western Nationals – July 21 – 26 Everett WA  
14U Western Nationals – July 21 – 26 Everett WA  
CA State Games – Class B -July 15-19 - San Diego, CA 10u, 12u, 14U

\*Top Teams from the Association Championship may earn a berth to Nationals or State Games.  
Additional berths may be awarded as determined by the Junior Olympic Commissioner.

### Class C

Association Championships 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U - June 12-14  
CA State Games – Class C - July 15-19 - San Diego, CA 8u, 10u, 12u

\*Top Teams from the Association Championship may earn a berth to the CA State Games. No additional berths are available.

## Recreational League FAQ

Q. Regarding eligibility, there are USA Softball of Sacramento rules, USA Softball Pacific Coast Region rules and the USA Softball Code. Which has priority?

A. Eligibility rules begin with the USA Softball Code. However, the USA Softball Code is sometimes general and for that reason the Pacific Coast Region expands some rules to clarify their application to the region. In turn, USA Softball of Sacramento further expands on those rules to better fit the situation for our local program. The USA Softball of Sacramento expanded rules may not conflict with the USA Softball Pacific Coast Region rules and the region rules may not conflict with the USA Softball Code.

Q. May a player participate with a travel team and then participate on an All-Star Team?

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A. A player may participate with a travel team and remain eligible for All-Star Team selection if that player stops participating with the travel team before March 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year. However if several players on the same team do it, they could violate other eligibility rules.

Q. How does USA Softball of Sacramento define “participate” or “participation”?

A. A player taking part in a tryout, workout, practice, practice game, game, or tournament.

Q. What happens to a player who drops from a travel team before March 31<sup>st</sup> and is then not selected for an All-Star Team?

A. The player may re-join the original travel team or join another travel team.

Q. May a player participating in two (2) leagues be selected to an All-Star Team?

A. Yes, but only in one (1) league. The player must, by March 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year, declare in which league they wish to be considered for All-Star selection.

Q. May a 10 year old player who participated with a 12u team during league play be selected for a 10u All-Star team?

A. Yes, providing the player meets all other eligibility requirements and that your league allows it.

Q. May a league team enter any event without approval of the league?

A. No.

Q. May a league that has been classified “B” reapply for “C” Classification?

A. A league that has been classified “B” may submit a “C” Eligibility Request Form

Q. Can the USA Softball of Sacramento eligibility rules be changed?

A. Yes, they are reviewed annually and decided on solely by the USA Softball of Sacramento office. Membership is encouraged to submit proposed changes in writing for the review by our staff.

Q. What is the Select Program?

A. The USA Softball of Sacramento Select program is designed to create a more competitive environment for players to participate in while still remaining in a recreational league setting. This program will allow USA Softball recreational leagues to form a team to represent their league in the Select program.

Q. Is Select also known as “Comp”?

A. While Select is definitely a more competitive environment for your above-average Rec players, it is not Comp in the “Travel/A ball” sense.

Q. Who is eligible to play on a Select team?

A. Only players that live or go to school within the league’s boundaries are eligible for Select. USA Softball reserves the right to grant waivers for special circumstances.

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Q. Do Select players also play on a Rec team?

A. Yes, players must participate in 75% of the recreation spring season to remain eligible. (monitored by the league)

Q. If playing Rec also, wouldn't practicing for two teams elicit burnout?

A. Select teams may practice as many times as they want prior to the beginning of spring rec practices and after their completion. During the regular season select teams will only be permitted to practice one time per week. (This is in addition to the select activities put on by USA Softball of Sacramento.)

Q. How long is the Select season?

A. Specific Select tournaments (including Nationals) run through late July/early August.

Q. Is the goal of the Select program to convert Select teams to A teams the following year?

A. No. The goal of the Select program is to give advanced recreational players an opportunity to play at a competitive level. The idea is to have these girls continue participation in the Select program year after year increasing the level of play over time. The younger regular recreational players will aspire to be Select players.

## Championship Play Rosters & Guidelines

### CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY

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 USA Softball. The following events are considered Championship Play:

- Local Association Championships
- Regional Championships
- National Tournaments
- National Championship Finals

### ROSTERS

Teams must compete with the same roster in all Championship Play, except teams are allowed to pick up three players when advancing in Championship Play.

1. Number of Players
  - a. A maximum of 20 players, including pick-up players will be permitted on a team roster.
2. Roster Deadline
  - a. The roster deadline is 24 hours prior to the start of Championship Play or as set by the Junior Olympic Commissioner.
  - b. Once a team has competed in any championship event, the participating players are frozen to that roster and may not compete with another team until the original team is no longer eligible for Championship Play. If a player leaves a team after Championship Play participation, they may not join another team until the original team is no longer eligible for Championship Play unless a Player Release Form has been approved by the Junior Olympic Commissioner.
  - c. Once a team qualifies and accepts the berth, that team's roster is then frozen and the only way additional players can be added to the team is on a Pick-Up Player Form.
3. Junior Olympic Rosters
  - a. Players may participate in more than one Junior Olympic Division (Girls Fast or Slow pitch) of play, but are limited to only one classification (A, B or C and 10, 12, 14, 16, 18) within a division of play.
  - b. A player may participate as a regular rostered player on only one team within a division in championship play during a season.

c. 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.

## GENERAL RULES FOR PICK-UP PLAYERS

Teams are permitted to pick-up three players per the USA Softball Code.

1. The team adding pick-up players must select eligible roster members from USA Softball registered teams
2. Pick-up players must have played for a USA Softball-registered team during the current season.
3. 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.
4. Pick-up players must be from the team's same or lower classification. **EXCEPTION:** Players who are age eligible may be picked up by a lower age classification team. **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' Fastpitch 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, she is not eligible to participate in Class B even if moving up in the age classification.
5. 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' FastPitch National Championship Finals is not an eligible pick-up player for any other Junior Olympic Girls' National Championship Finals.
6. No player may be picked up for National Qualifiers, Junior Olympic Hall of Fame Tournaments or National Gold Qualifying tournaments.

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7. In Junior Olympic divisions of play, a pick-up player may not be substituted for after participation.
8. A player may play as a pick-up player with only one team other than their rostered USA Softball registered team within a division in a season.
9. 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.



## APPENDIX A – Tournament Sanctioning Policy

USA Softball of Sacramento takes great pride in our invitational tournaments. In an effort to run top-tier events, we aim to team with quality tournament directors to attract teams to the USA Softball tournament program. Team managers have become great customers and are very cognizant of the benefits of USA Softball umpires, USA Softball rules, and the guarantee of registered, classified teams, thus keeping the field equitable and making winning possible.

Tournament directors must abide by all USA Softball rules and regulations, including classifications. Tournaments may provide tournament specific rules as approved by the USA Softball of Sacramento office. Examples of this include time limits, substitution rules, etc.

Requests for tournament dates are up to the USA Softball of Sacramento office to approve. Dates that conflict with championship play will not be sanctioned. Members wishing to host USA Softball sanctioned tournaments, must submit the following sanction agreement at least 30 days prior to the scheduled event.

This agreement outlines the minimum requirements to host a USA Softball sanctioned tournament.

### Host Responsibilities and Requirements

- Host is responsible to secure all field permits and paperwork.
- Host is responsible for ensuring the tournament is posted on Tourney Machine platform.
- Host is responsible to ensure all teams participating are registered with USA Softball.\*
- Host is responsible for scheduling all games.
- Host is responsible for ordering the award package.
- Host is responsible for ordering softballs. Discount available.
- Host is responsible for sending schedule to the approved umpire assignor at least 5 days prior.
- Host is responsible for paying their USA Softball and umpire invoices within 14 days.
- Host is responsible for all logistical needs of the tournament.
- Host is responsible for all profits and losses of their tournament.

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- USA Softball of Sacramento will assist with the digital design of a flyer for the event. (No Cost)
- USA Softball of Sacramento will assist with the promotion of the tournament. (No Cost)
- USA Softball of Sacramento will provide liability insurance for the tournament and provide any
- additional insurance certificates needed by the field owners as long as all teams are registered with USA Softball. \* (No Cost)
- USA Softball of Sacramento will assign officials based on the game schedule provided. (Cost)
- Tournament Costs
- It is up to the Tournament Director to determine a budget based on an estimate of the costs associated with running a tournament including field rental, awards, softballs, umpires, site directors, logistics, etc). Once a budget is determined, you then must figure out your entry fee. Once you do, add \$20 to the entry fee to cover the costs that you are responsible for paying to USA Softball of Sacramento. • Tournament USA Fee = \$10 Per Team
- Youth Scholarship Donation = \$10 Per Team



## APPENDIX B – Complaint Procedure

When there are allegations of violations of the USA Softball Code and/or the USA Softball of Sacramento Rules and Regulations, members have the opportunity to file an official complaint with the USA Softball of Sacramento office.

The procedure for filing an official complaint is as follows:

1. A USA Softball of Sacramento Official Complaint Form shall be filed. The form is available in the USA Softball of Sacramento website. The complaint shall be set forth in clear and concise language, preferably in numbered paragraphs: (i) the alleged violation grievance and (ii) the remedy requested.
2. A money order or cashier's check in the amount of \$50.00 made payable to USA Softball of Sacramento must accompany the complaint. The \$50.00 is non-refundable and may be waived only by the USA Softball of Sacramento Commissioner.
3. Documentation substantiating the alleged violation must be provided in the complaint. Examples of such evidence are witness statements, documentation, photos, copies of email communication, etc. Witnesses to the alleged violation must be named with their addresses and phone numbers listed.
4. Receipt of the complaint shall be acknowledged by a USA Softball of Sacramento member via the USPS or email within 14 days. If a sufficient basis exists for a hearing, the hearing shall be scheduled within a reasonable time, but not later than 60 days from receipt of the complaint providing all required information has been submitted.

*Note: Any complaints involving athlete safety does not require a filing fee and they may be filed anonymously.*



## APPENDIX C – Administration of a Hearing

USA Softball of Sacramento has jurisdiction over and shall hear and decide matters that occur within the Greater Sacramento Association or which pertain to the local association's members or participants as outlined in Section 15 of the USA Softball Bylaws.

The USA Softball office will follow the USA Softball Bylaws for such proceedings.

## APPENDIX D – Background Check Screening Policy

The following individuals are subject to background check requirements in order to be members of USA Softball and/or a USA Softball local association:

- Any volunteer, contractor and/or employee who has regular access to minors in USA Softball or USA Softball local association programs; and
- Any additional person(s) required by applicable law to undergo a background check, including persons required pursuant to the laws of the State of Pennsylvania; and
- Any additional person(s) required by rules or requirements of USA Softball’s local association members to undergo a background check as a condition of participation in that local association member’s programs and activities; and
- Any members of the media who are provided media credentials and/or access to minor athletes or members of a National Team at USA Softball events.
- Any persons ages 17 and older that are participating or assisting with the USA Softball National Team programs. Those age 17 will need a signed parental consent.
- All adults (ages 18 and older) assisting on the field/dugout during Junior Olympic (youth) play.
- Any umpires age 18 years or older that are appointed by the NGB to national championship events or international events.
- All voting members of the USA Softball General Council.
- Local Association Softball Officials
- 

USA Softball, Inc. (“USA Softball”) and/or USA Softball’s state/metro associations reserve the right to screen any volunteer, contractor and/or employee who has access to minors in USA Softball programs. The screening may consist of (1) a Staff and Volunteer Application Form, (2) an interview, (3) consent to reference and fingerprint for a background check report, and/or (4) approval by staff and/or committee members.

Please note that the 50 states of the United States adopt different laws and categorize the offenses differently. The USA Softball list of offenses below is not intended to be an exhaustive list of offenses but a list of commonly used terms to define the offenses. Other convictions, accusations, charges or facts should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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If a reportable record or disclosure that contains a disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding, other than an adjudication of not guilty,<sup>1</sup> or the existence of pending charges, for any of the below

criminal offenses, USA Softball, its National Background Check Committee, and/or its state/metro associations shall undertake a review of such individual's application to determine whether such person should be permitted to participate in USA Softball programs:

1. Any felony;
2. Any misdemeanor involving:
  - a. All sexual crimes, criminal offenses of a sexual nature to include but not limited to; rape, child molestation, sexual battery, lewd conduct, possession and distribution of child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, prostitution, indecent exposure, public indecency, and any sex offender registrant.
  - b. Any drug related offenses.
  - c. Harm to a minor or vulnerable person, including, but not limited to, offenses such as child abandonment, child endangerment/neglect/abuse, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and DUI with a minor.
  - d. Violence against a person, force, or threat of force (including crimes involving deadly weapons and domestic violence).
  - e. Stalking, harassment, blackmail, violation of a protection order, and/or threats;
  - f. Destruction of property, including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief; and
  - g. Animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect.

If a background check is performed and reveals a conviction of any of aforementioned offenses, then the application shall be reviewed by a member of the National Background Check Committee (or such person's designee) for a determination of eligibility. A denial of eligibility may be appealed by the applicant to the entire National Background Check Committee. In addition, if the background check reveals that the applicant is listed on a sex offender registry, then the applicant shall be ineligible for participation in USA Softball programs.

1. For purposes of these procedures, a "disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding, other than an adjudication of not guilty" shall include, but is not limited to: an adjudication of guilt or admission to a criminal violation, a plea to the charge or a lesser included offense, a plea of no contest, any plea analogous to an Alford or Kennedy plea, the disposition of the proceeding through a diversionary program, deferred adjudication, deferred prosecution, disposition of supervision, conditional dismissal, juvenile

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delinquency adjudication, or similar arrangement, or the existence of an ongoing criminal investigation, a warrant for arrest, or any pending charges.

2. For purposes of these procedures, the term “felony” shall refer to any criminal offense punishable by imprisonment for more than one year.

3. Any participant that has been convicted of, received an imposition of a deferred sentence for, or any plea of guilty or no contest for any sexual crime, criminal offense of a sexual nature, and/or is a sex offender registrant must be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

## APPENDIX E – Background Check Appeal Process

USA Softball recognizes that no policy can encompass every situation, so USA Softball has formed its National Background Check Committee to evaluate applications and decide appeals variance requests on a case-by-case basis in certain situations where good cause exists.

An applicant may appeal a denial of eligibility to the entire National Background Check Committee, so long as the appeal is timely filed within fourteen (14) days of the date stated on the denial correspondence. The appeal process shall provide the applicant with an opportunity to present his/her side of the story. An appeal may advise the Committee of incorrect information appearing in a background check report, a mistaken identity with another individual, or extenuating circumstances as to why the person should be permitted to participate despite a conviction of one of the aforementioned offenses.

Any person whose application for participation in USA Softball's program has been denied may appeal the denial within fourteen (14) days to USA Softball's National Background Check Committee by filing his/her appeal with his/her USA Softball State/Metro Local Association Commissioner. All appeals shall be in writing and sent first to the Commissioner of the State/Metro association. The written appeal submission must contain a statement of the specific grounds why the prior determination should be reversed and must be accompanied by all evidence supporting the request for reversal. With the written appeal submission, the person filing the appeal may also file any other information or evidence in support of the appeal. The USA Softball State/Metro Local Association Commissioner will review the information and make a recommendation to the National Background Check Committee in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The National Background Check Committee shall review the appeal and decide whether the applicant's appeal should be granted or denied.

Subject to the Mandatory Ineligibility requirements below, in extenuating circumstances and for good cause shown, USA Softball's National Background Check Committee shall have the authority to, but not be required to, grant an appeal and permit an individual to participate in USA Softball's program even though that person has been convicted of one of the above non-mandatory offenses (or its equivalent).

Mandatory Ineligibility for Certain Offenses and Applicants listed on a Sex Offender Registry:

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Any of the following shall constitute an applicant's mandatory ineligibility from participation in USA Softball programs: (a) an applicant's current listing on any sex offender registry; or (b) for any offense(s) marked with an

“\*\*”. For all such applications, the National Background Check Committee may consider appeals based upon incorrectly reported information and/or mistaken identity but the Committee shall not have the authority to grant an appeal for extenuating circumstances or good cause shown in instances where the applicant is currently listed on a sex offender registry or has been convicted of the type of offense marked with a “\*\*” above. Notwithstanding the foregoing, to the extent this Policy directly conflicts with any terms or conditions of any policy of the USOPC or U.S. Center for SafeSport concerning a person's ineligibility to participate, then the USOPC or U.S. Center for SafeSport's ineligibility determination or policy shall be controlling and shall apply.

## Appendix F – Age Classification Chart

Use the chart below to determine Junior Olympic age classification for the 2025-2026 season which lasts from September 1, 2025 until August 31, 2026.

### 2025 USA Softball Age Chart



Match month (top line) and box with year of birth. The player's age and division is indicated on the right.

SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	AGE	DIVISION
2018	2018	2018	2018	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	5	6U
2017	2017	2017	2017	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	6	6U
2016	2016	2016	2016	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	7	8U
2015	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	8	8U
2014	2014	2014	2014	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	9	10U
2013	2013	2013	2013	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	10	10U
2012	2012	2012	2012	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	11	12U
2011	2011	2011	2011	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	12	12U
2010	2010	2010	2010	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	13	14U
2009	2009	2009	2009	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	14	14U
2008	2008	2008	2008	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	15	16U
2007	2007	2007	2007	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	16	16U
2006	2006	2006	2006	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	17	18U
2005	2005	2005	2005	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	18	18U

NOTE: This age chart is for USA Softball, and only for the 2025 season.



*8-Under Age Classification...A player whose 9th birthday is prior to September 1, 2025, is INELIGIBLE. 10-Under Age Classification...A player whose 11th birthday is prior to September 1, 2025, is INELIGIBLE. 12-Under Age Classification...A player whose 13th birthday is prior to September 1, 2025, is INELIGIBLE. 14-Under Age Classification...A player whose 15th birthday is prior to September 1, 2025, is INELIGIBLE. 16-Under Age Classification...A player whose 17th birthday is prior to September 1, 2025, is INELIGIBLE. 18-Under Age Classification...A player whose 19th birthday is prior to September 1, 2025, is INELIGIBLE.*

## Appendix G – Concussion Protocol Guidelines

Assembly Bill No. 2007, Youth Athletics: Youth Sports Organizations: Concussions or other Head Injuries.

Prior to January 1, 2017, law required a school district, charter school or private school, that offered an athletic program to immediately remove an athlete from an athletic activity for the remainder of the day if the athlete was suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury, and prohibited the athlete from returning to the athletic activity until the athlete was evaluated by a licensed health care provider, trained in the management of concussions, and acting within the scope of their practice, and the athlete received written clearance from the licensed health care provider to return to the athletic activity. The law also required, on a yearly basis, that a concussion and head injury information sheet be signed and returned by the athlete and the athlete's parent/guardian before the athlete's initiating practice or competition.

On September 23, 2016, The Governor signed into law Assembly Bill 2007, which, on January 1, 2017, applied the above-mentioned provisions to athletes participating in youth sports organizations. The youth organizations are defined to include organizations, businesses, nonprofit entities, or local governmental agencies that sponsor or conduct amateur sports competitions, training, camps, or clubs in which persons 17 years of age and younger participate in any of the 27 designated sports. One of the designated sports is Softball. Therefore, youth softball organizations are now required to notify the parents or guardians of athletes 17 years of age or younger who have been removed from athletic activities due to suspected concussions, as specified in the following pages. The law requires youth softball organizations to offer concussion and head injury education, or related educational materials, or both, to each coach and administrator on a yearly basis, as prescribed in the following pages. The law further requires each coach and administrator to successfully complete the concussion and head injury education at least once annually either online or in person. Additionally, the law requires youth softball organizations to identify procedures for ensuring compliance with the law's requirements for providing concussion and head injury education and a concussion and head injury information sheet. The law further requires youth softball organizations to identify procedures to ensure compliance with the athlete removal provisions and the return-to-play protocol, as specified. This law applies to all persons participating in youth softball, regardless of age.

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To assist the youth softball leagues and teams affiliated with USA Softball of Sacramento comply with AB 2007, information, materials, and online links can be found on our website.

- Youth Sports and Concussions (Assembly Bill 2007)
- Concussion Information Sheet
- Parent and Athlete Concussion Policy Statement Sheet
- Graded Concussion Symptom Checklist
- Acute Concussion Notification Form for Parents/Guardians
- Concussion Return-to-Play (RTP) Protocol
- Concussion Certification for Coaches and Administrators
- Physician Letter to League/Team (Concussion)

Please contact our Junior Olympic Commissioner or any other member of our Junior Olympic Staff should you require assistance or more information

## Appendix H – Parent Code of Ethics

- I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this Parents' Code of Ethics Pledge.
- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports event.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth – not for adults.
- I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
- I promise to help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching, or providing transportation.
- I will require that my child's coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth sports coach and that the coach uphold the Coaches' Code of Ethics.

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_