

Florida Championship Series Policies and Procedures

Purpose: The purpose of policies and procedures is to develop and present an outline that will govern the Florida Championship Series and provide an equal opportunity for all member teams and organizations. The Florida state policies and procedures are developed in conjunction with the national rules. The Florida policies and procedures supersede the national rules for events that are included as a part of the Florida Championship Series.

How policies and procedures are developed: Each member team or organization has the opportunity to submit any recommendation of change in policy or procedure to the Florida state office prior to the end of the season (July 31). Each recommendation is reviewed and voted on by the Florida State Steering Committee during its annual meeting. Changes are sent by email to the contact of record for all member teams. New policies and procedures are posted on the Florida USSSA website in November and take effect Dec. 1.

What they govern: The Florida policies and procedures govern the Florida Championship Series, which includes all weekend shootouts, Open and qualifying tournaments that lead to and include the State Championship Tournaments.

2011-12 Policies and Procedures

Game Time

Game time will also be forfeit time (SEE EXCEPTION BELOW).

Exception: The tournament director or state office staff member assigned to the tournament can allow a grace period for unforeseen circumstances. (Example: Traffic conditions). This can only happen when the team is communicating its difficulties. Only the tournament director or state office staff member can forfeit a game. Officials and Site Directors **do not** have the authority to forfeit a game.

* Games will not start early unless both coaches agree. Neither referees nor site directors have the authority to require teams to start a game prior to the scheduled starting time.

* Pregame warm up and halftime will be 10 minutes unless games are running behind schedule, and then each may be reduced to 5 minutes.

Game Ball

Official balls for the 2012 Florida Championship Series are Reebok, Wilson, Spalding, Nike, Rawlings and the USSSA Baden ball.

* The tournament is responsible for providing the game ball.

* Each team is responsible for its own warm up balls.

Divisions of Play

There are three divisions of play available for teams in the Florida Championship Series.

Division I: Elite teams

Division II: Competitive Teams

Division III: School teams (all players must attend the same school); or recreational or developmental teams.

Tournament Play for Boys & Girls (All Grades)

- * Pool play will consist of one division of play per grade.
- * Tournament divisions with five or less teams entered will consist of a single division throughout pool and bracket play.
- * Tournament divisions with six or more teams will consist of one division during pool play before being divided into two separate divisions for bracket play. Division I and Division II brackets will be based on a team's place of finish in pool play.
- * At the conclusion of pool play, the teams with the best records will play Division I and the remaining teams will play Division II in bracket play.
- * Florida USSSA is a grade-based program in ALL divisions. Players may play at their grade level or higher. **Players may play down a grade level if they do not exceed the age exception requirement for the lower grade level.**

Rosters

- * A team roster may have up to 15 players and 4 total coaches / managers/ scorekeepers/ administrators. All non-players **MUST** be members of ACA and have an ACA membership card to sit on the bench. Team scorekeepers are not allowed to sit at the scorer's table during games.
- * Teams participating in the national tournament may add up to three players who were not previously on the roster, but may not add any players from teams that have qualified and are playing in the national championships.
- * A team roster is frozen at the start of the first game in a tournament.
- * A roster becomes officially approved after the state office staff has approved all players on the roster through the check-in process.
- * A player can be on more than one roster within the same organization. A list of an organization's teams must be submitted to the state office if the teams play under a different name.
- * A player can be on the roster of multiple divisions within the same organization as long as he/she meets the age requirement for each division.
- * A player becomes locked to a team when his/her team plays in a USSSA event after March 1, 2011.
- * A player can change rosters after March 1 only if released by the coach and the organization / club president (A player can change organizations once after March 1st.)
- * The appeals committee will determine if the player should be released. A player who has filed a player release form with their coach and feels they are unfairly being denied their release may file an appeal in writing with the state office.
- * A player may be on a roster in more than one age division and may play in more than one age division of a tournament, but may play on only one team in any single age division in a tournament.
- * The official roster for the state tournament is set and frozen at the last qualifying tournament a team participates in prior to the state tournament.
- * Only boys may participate on boys' teams and only girls may participate on girls' teams.

Central Check-In

- * All tournaments will have a central check-in.
- * All teams or team representatives **MUST** appear at check in during the posted times.
- * At tournaments with less than 30 total teams, the Tournament Director is responsible for handling all check in duties.
- * The head coach or team administrator must check in at all tournaments.
- * The head coach or team administrator must bring his team book to central check-in with the following information:
 1. Official USSSA Team Roster (which must be printed from the national site, www.ussa.com) and must be signed by each player and his / her parent or guardian.

2. Proof of age for each player: the acceptable proof of age is a clean copy of a birth certificate, adoption papers, or immigration papers.

3. Proof of grade: acceptable proof of grade is a clean copy of a report card from the current school year, signed documentation from the host school district for a home school student (Form EL7S) or an original letter from the school's administration with a contact phone number included.

4. A current picture.

Player Check-In

* All players must attend check-in with their coach at the first tournament of the year in which they participate and at the state and national tournaments.

* Any player not clearing check-in must return to central check-in with their coach at each tournament until cleared.

* Coaches are responsible for the team meeting all eligibility requirements. If a player is found to be ineligible prior to the start of a sanctioned competition, the player will be expelled and the team will continue. After competition starts, if a player is found to be ineligible, he/she will be expelled and the team will forfeit all games in which the player's name appeared in the official scorebook. Coaches who falsify documents will be suspended for the remainder of the season. A second violation will result in a lifetime suspension from Florida USSSA.

* The team book MUST be available for review **immediately upon request** by the USSSA state office representative or the Tournament Director at any and all times during a tournament.

Officials

* All officials must be certified and registered with their respective state officials association.

* Officials are allowed to work a maximum of six games a day during a tournament.

* In all 9th Grade divisions and older, three-man crews shall officiate all semifinal and championship games of a state-qualifying, state or national tournament.

Scorekeepers/Clock Operators:

* The tournament will provide scorekeepers and clock operators for all games.

* Scorekeepers and clock operators must be at least 15 years old or in 9th grade.

* Scorekeepers and clock operators are not permitted to use electronic devices (i.e. cell phones) while at the scorer's table.

Uniforms

* Player jerseys must have numbers on both front and back. Numbers may be from 00-99. Minimum size of numbers shall be 2" on front and 4" on back.

* Teams must have dark and light jerseys.

* Home team wears light and visitors wear dark jerseys.

Protests

* All roster protests must be filed in writing accompanied by a \$100.00 protest fee (refundable if the protest is upheld) with the Tournament Director within one (1) hour of the conclusion of the protested game. If the protest is valid, the protested team forfeits all previous games. Upon protest, teams must provide proof of eligibility immediately.

* All non-roster protests must be filed in writing within one (1) hour of the conclusion of the contest and must be accompanied by a \$100.00 protest fee (refundable if the protest is upheld). Official's calls are not grounds for a protest.

* The tournament director may assign a committee to handle protests or may decide the protest on his own. The tournament director's decision is final.

Bench Personnel

- * A team may have no more than four bench personnel including managers or scorekeepers. All must be members of ACA.
- * At least one person on the bench must be 18 years of age. If because of removal or sickness there are no ACA members above the age of 18 on the bench, tournament officials may disqualify the team.
- * All ACA members MUST wear their ACA card in plain sight if they are sitting on the bench or are in the bench area.

Tiebreakers

- * Two Teams Tied: Head-to-head result
 - * Three or more teams: Point Differential System will be used.
- Teams will receive a point differential per game up to a maximum of plus 15 points for a win and a maximum of minus 15 points for loss. The team with the highest point total will win the tiebreaker. The team with the second highest number will be seeded second, etc. If two teams are still tied after Point Differential, then revert back to head-to-head. The teams not involved in the tiebreaker will have its games eliminated. If the teams are still tied, the team with the fewest points allowed in ALL games played in pool play wins.

Sportsmanship and Unsportsmanlike Conduct Procedures

- * Athletes, coaches, administrators, spectators, and all other persons connected directly or indirectly with a USSSA member team, as well as contest officials, shall adhere to the principles of good sportsmanship and the ethics of competition before, during and after all contests in which they participate and/or attend. Each participating USSSA team and its head coach shall be held strictly accountable for unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of its competitors, coaches and spectators.
- * An athlete, coach, administrator or spectator who commits an act of malicious and hateful nature toward a contest official, opponent or any other person attending a USSSA contest shall be guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct.
- * If contestants or people from any USSSA team are found guilty of carelessness or maliciously breaking, damaging or destroying property or equipment belonging to a host tournament site or host organization, that USSSA team will be held responsible for costs incurred in replacing or repairing such property or equipment.
- * If contestants participate in a bench and/or a bleacher-clearing fight, both teams will be suspended for the remainder of the tournament.
- * The Florida USSSA office will keep records of problem teams. After the first negative report, the team will be notified by letter by the state office about its actions. After two negative reports, the team will be notified by letter by the state office that it has been placed on probation. After a third negative report, the team will be notified by letter by the state office that it has been suspended from further competition, at a minimum, for the remainder of the current season.

Disqualification (ejection)

- * Level I: Athlete and/or Coach at a minimum suspended from that game and the next game. If it was the last game of the weekend for that team, then the consequences will be carried over to the next tournament the Athlete and/or Coach participate in. Incident will be reported to the state office to determine if additional consequences are needed.
- * Level II: Athlete and/or Coach at a minimum suspended for the remainder of the tournament. Incident will be reported to the state office to determine if additional consequences are needed.
- * Level III: Athlete and/or Coach at a minimum suspended for the remainder of the season. Incident will be reported to the state office to determine if additional consequences are needed.
- * Level IV: Athlete and/or Coach suspended for life.

Restrictions on Disqualified Coach

- (a) Must immediately leave the competition to a place where he/she is not visible to the athletes, officials, spectators or other coaches and where he/she cannot see the competition.
- (b) Must not have any further contact with or give instruction to athletes or other members of his/her staff for the remainder of the contest, including halftime intermission, breaks between quarters and post-contest activities.
- (c) Shall not attend any subsequent contest from which he/she has been suspended in any capacity, shall not be present at the site, and shall not accompany his/her team to the site of the contest.

Crowd Control

* The site director is responsible for the control of spectators during a contest. The officials assigned to work a contest are responsible for the conduct of the contest itself. In the event, however, a spectator or group of spectators interferes with the conduct of the contest or causes an official to become distracted through continual, unrelenting verbal abuse, the official should immediately stop the action and report the spectator or group of spectators to the site director and ask that they be restrained or removed from the facility. The head coach will be held responsible for actions of spectators attached to his/her team and will be responsible to assist the site director in any action required requested.

Right to Refuse Entry

* Tournament directors have the right to refuse entry to a USSSA basketball event for any team with approval of the USSSA state office.

State Tournament Qualifying

* The official roster for the state tournament is set and frozen at the last qualifying tournament a team participates in prior to the state tournament.

Boys & Girls Division I and Division II

- a) No limit on the number of teams that may qualify for the state tournament.
- b) Teams must play in a minimum of two state-qualifying tournaments.
- c) The **NIT and Elite Series tournaments** count as state-qualifying tournaments.
- d) State Tournament seeding is based on USSSA Power Rating Rankings.
- e) State Tournament format will be the same as regular-season play with four-team pools. The 1st and 2nd place teams in each pool will advance to the Division I bracket and the 3rd and 4th place teams in each pool will advance to the Silver Division II bracket. Both brackets will be played out through a championship game.

Boys & Girls Division III:

- a) Only two age divisions in high school (Varsity: Grade 11 and JV: Grade 10)
- b) Teams do not need to play any state qualifying tournaments to qualify for the state tournament.
- c) If more than 16 teams register for the tournament, teams will be divided into Large school and Small school divisions.
- d) State Tournament seeding is based on USSSA Power Rating Rankings.

Qualifying for Nationals

- * Teams must participate in the state championship tournament.
- * Request exemption: Teams can request an exemption for special circumstances through the Florida State office.

National Tournament of Champions

* The 1st and 2nd place teams in each Division I age group at the national championships will qualify for the National Tournament of Champions.