

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 in August. Changes are sent by email to the contact of record for all member teams in September. New policies and procedures are posted on the Florida USSSA website in October 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.

2008-09 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 warmup 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 2009 Florida Championship Series are Reebok, Wilson, Spalding, Baden and the USSSA Rawlings ball.

* The tournament is responsible for providing the game ball.

* Each team is responsible for its own warmup 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 / Community based

Division III: School teams (all players must attend the same school)

* There must be enough teams to support more than one division in a tournament. If there are less than three teams in a division, the teams will be moved up to the next level of play. Tournament Directors can select to have only one division of play in any given age division.

* Division II play for girls will be available at the state tournaments. Any girls team ranked in the top four of its age division at the conclusion of the regular season may not play in Division II at the state tournament.

* Boys Division I teams can move to Division II during the season. A Division I team may participate at the Division II level in the state tournament under the following conditions:

- a) It registers as a Division II team no later than May 20, 2009.
- b) It participates at the Division II level in one state-qualifying tournament during the season.
- c) Is not ranked in the top sixteen (16) Division I teams after the final qualifying tournament to determine state tournament eligibility.
- d) Has a USSSA Power Rating under 1,000.

The reason for divisional play is to create parity on the court for all teams. The USSSA state office has the right at anytime to move a team up to the appropriate level of play.

* A Division II or Division III team can play up a level.

* A Division I or Division II team can not play down.

* Points earned by a Division II or Division III team playing up will be credited.

* A Division II team moving to Division I will forfeit all the points it has earned at the Division II level.

* 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 maximum 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.

* 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, 2009.

* 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.)

* 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

* 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, or an original letter from the school's administration with a contact phone number included.

4. A current picture: one taken after Aug. 1, 2008.

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.

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.

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 protest must be filed in writing accompanied by a \$100.00 protest fee with the Tournament Director PRIOR to the protested game. If the protest is valid, the protested team forfeits all previous games. Upon protest, teams must immediately provide proof of eligibility.

* All non-roster protest must be filed in writing within one (1) hour of the conclusion of the contest and accompanied with the \$100.00 protest fee. Officials calls are not grounds for 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.
- * The fee will be returned if the protest is upheld.

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.

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 20 points for a win and a maximum of minus 20 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.
- * 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.

Disqualification (ejection)

- * For **general** unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant foul:
Athlete and Coach suspended from that game and the next game. If it was the last game of the weekend, then the consequence will be carried over to the next tournament the athlete or coach participates in.
- * For **gross** unsportsmanlike conduct, or for second or subsequent act of general unsportsmanlike conduct of flagrant foul.
Athlete and Coach suspended from competition for remainder of the weekend and all games on all levels for a minimum of one additional weekend.

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.

State Tournament Qualifying

Boys Division I:

- a) Top 24 teams in each age division based on total number of points.
- b) Teams must play in a minimum of two state-qualifying tournaments.
- c) The Regional Championship counts as a state-qualifying tournament.
- d) State Tournament seeding is based on USSSA Power Rating Rankings.

Boys Division II:

- a) No limit on the number of teams in Division II.
- b) Teams must play in a minimum of two qualifying tournaments and at least one must be a Division II qualifying tournament.
- c) The Regional Championship counts as a state-qualifying tournament.
- d) Any team ranked in the top 16 teams by points in Division I is not eligible for the Division II state tournament.
- e) Any Division I team with a Power Rating of 1,000 or more is not eligible to play in the Division II state tournament.
- f) State Tournament seeding is based on USSSA Power Rating Rankings.

Boys Division III:

- a) Only two age divisions (High School: Grade 11 and JV: Grade 10)
- b) Teams must play in a minimum of two state-qualifying events.
- 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.

Girls Division I:

- a) Top 16 teams in each age division by total number of points.
- b) Teams must play in a minimum of two state-qualifying tournaments.
- c) The Regional Championship counts as a state-qualifying tournament.
- d) State Tournament seeding is based on USSSA Power Rating Rankings.

Girls Division II:

- a) No limit on the number of teams.
- b) Teams must play in a minimum of two state-qualifying tournaments.

- c) The Regional Championship counts as a state-qualifying tournament.
- d) Any team ranked in the Top 4 in Power Rating in Division I is not eligible for the Division II State Tournament.
- d) State Tournament seeding is based on USSSA Power Rating Rankings.

Girls Division III:

- a) Only two age divisions (High School: Grade 11 and JV: Grade 10)
- b) Teams must play in a minimum of two state-qualifying events.
- 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

- * At State Tournaments: Top eight (8) teams in each age group in all divisions qualify for nationals.
- * Regional Championship: Top Four (4) teams in each age group in all divisions qualify for nationals.
- * Request exemption: Teams can request an exemption for special circumstances through the Florida State office.