

**SECTION 1: OC FALL BALL PARTICIPATION & COMMITMENT**

1. The purpose of OC Fall Ball is to provide all member leagues the opportunity to play other member leagues in a structured environment throughout the Fall season.
2. All leagues, and teams at all levels within each league, must commit to being a full-time participant in the OC Fall Ball season.
  - a. Full-time Participant: OC Fall Ball teams will be required to play all scheduled friendly games (Rec and Select) and all Select teams must play in both tournaments (Rec teams are highly encouraged to participate in the Rec Tournament, but are not required to do so).
3. Any individual team from a member league may opt-out of participating in OC Fall Ball altogether, if they so choose, with appropriate notice given **PRIOR** to **September 1st** of the Fall season. These teams will not be included in any schedule and will forfeit the opportunity to participate in any OC Fall Ball sanctioned events throughout the season (including tournaments).
4. Schedule Commitment
  - a. All teams (both Rec & Select) may request to take **one weekend off** during the regular season (friendly games). This request shall be made to the OC Fall Ball scheduler **PRIOR** to **August 25th** of the Fall season. Teams are free to do whatever they wish during this off week (rest, play a travel tournament, play friendlies against other non-OCFB teams, etc.) with no penalty. The OCFB scheduler will not grant more than one request without the vote and approval of the OCFB Board.
  - b. After August 25th, and following the release of the game schedule, teams may not cancel or attempt to reschedule games, except under unforeseen circumstances (injuries, illnesses, etc.) and with approval of the OCFB Board.
  - c. Any player or team, should they fulfill their OCFB obligations first, are free to do whatever else they want on non-OCFB days, including playing on a Travel team or playing in Travel tournaments/friendlies.
  - d. Penalty for canceling previously scheduled Select games without prior notice and approval:
    - i. If prior to the Pumpkin tournament: disqualification from the Pumpkin tournament (will be allowed in Turkey tournament if remaining schedule fulfilled)
    - ii. If between the Pumpkin tournament and the Turkey tournament: disqualification from the Turkey tournament
    - iii. If twice or more during the season: disqualification from both tournaments
  - e. Penalty for canceling Rec games: Disqualification from the Rec tournament

**SECTION 2: TEAM FORMATION**

1. Leagues may form their Fall Ball teams in any manner, with equity in mind, but remember that Gold Select teams are more competitive than Silver Select teams and recreational teams have the goal for every girl to play and improve their skills.
2. Each team may have a maximum of 15 players on their roster.
3. SELECT TEAMS

- a. In the 10U and 12U divisions, teams will be placed in one of two divisions and will be defined as either a Gold or Silver team based upon the makeup of the team. In the 8U and 14U divisions all teams will be placed in the same division (subject to 2.4 below).
  - b. In the 10U and 12U divisions all USA Softball Designated B-leagues are required to provide a team that meets the “Gold” team requirements or is competitive enough to play a “Gold” level schedule. Exceptions will be considered by OCFB board.
  - c. “Gold” teams will be defined as: Teams having on their Fall Ball roster, five (5) or more current year district (Gold) All-Star players or eight (8) or more current year district + tournament (Silver) All-Stars. Teams will play each other during the season and tournaments. (District All-Star is defined in section 2.6)
  - d. “Silver” teams will be defined as: Teams having on their Fall Ball roster, four (4) or less current year district (Gold) All-Star players or seven (7) or less current year district + tournament (Silver) All-Stars. Teams in this category have the option of playing up in the “Gold” division during the season or tournament play.
  - e. For Select player eligibility see section 3.2(a)
4. REC TEAMS
    - a. With sufficient interest, 14U teams may be broken up into Rec and Select divisions. Otherwise, 14U will remain Select only.
  5. Practices for Fall Ball can start no earlier than July 31st.
  6. The teams that finish in 1st place in the Pumpkin Tournament must play Gold level in the Turkey Tournament.
  7. Only OC Fall Ball approved leagues are eligible for any OC Fall Ball tournaments. NO outside teams.
  8. Rosters will be FROZEN October 1st. No new players can be added. All rosters, both Rec and Select, must be submitted prior to this date and will be used to fulfill the roster requirement for all tournaments.
  9. Current year USA Softball rules shall apply except as modified herein.
  10. 14 and Under Division Only:
    - a. 14U player age eligibility, for the Fall only, will begin with January 1st of the oldest birth year (Not September 1st) and subject to item (d.) listed below. These players will be allowed to participate on a Fall team.
    - b. Example: If the USA Softball 14U age classification is Sep.1, 2009 thru Aug. 31, 2010, players born between Jan 1, 2008 thru Aug 31, 2009 will be allowed to play in Fall, despite not being eligible to play in the following Spring.
    - c. The purpose of this rule is to allow players who completed their USA Softball eligibility in the Spring one last chance to play before either discontinuing their softball career or moving on to play for their HS team.
    - d. A maximum of two (2) players entering their second year of high school are allowed per 14U team.
  11. Any select player may sub on a higher division team but not within the same or lower division for all non-tournament games. Rec players may sub on a select team in the

same or higher division for all non-tournament games. All players for tournament games must be rostered on the team to be eligible to play on that team.

12. Tournaments: All leagues will submit player rosters to the OC Fall Ball group prior to October 1st (Item 8 above). Each league will be responsible for ensuring that their league insurance is up-to-date, players are registered, and coaches have completed the background check and other requirements necessary to be eligible to participate on the field. Any other necessary requirements will be communicated by the hosting leagues.

### SECTION 3: PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

#### 1. PLAYER REGISTRATION

- a. All players in OC Fall Ball must be registered with USA Softball by September 17, 2023 (third Sunday in September.)

#### 2. SELECT TEAMS

- a. All players must play in the respective age division required by the new USA Softball age classifications (September 1st thru Aug 31st in 2-year increments).
- b. Players will **NOT** be allowed to “stay/play down”.
- c. Players may be allowed to “play up” to a higher division at the discretion of each league.
- d. Any exception request must be submitted to the OCFB Board for vote and approval.
- e. If an ALL-STAR player is Playing Up in a higher division during the Fall Ball season, they will not be considered an All-Star player for the purpose of team classification. (i.e. a 10U All-Star playing in 12U is not considered an All-Star for that team).

#### 3. REC TEAMS

- a. OC Fall Ball recommends that all players be registered in the division that corresponds with the new USA Softball age classifications (September 1st thru Aug 31st in 2-year increments).
- b. Allowing “play down” requests for Rec should be rare, but individual leagues are permitted to use their own discretion when determining the appropriate level of play for each of their players, considering ability, experience, and safety of play.
- c. Players may be allowed to “play up” to a higher division at the discretion of each league.
- d. Any exception request must be submitted to the OCFB Board for vote and approval.

#### 4. PLAYER TOURNAMENT ELIGIBILITY

- a. To be eligible to participate in the Select Tournaments, a player must have played in at least 50% of the Fall Ball Select scheduled regular season games.
- b. Select teams must maintain records of participation in all games through rosters on GameChanger or physical score books, including player numbers and last names.

5. Exceptions may be made for players who missed games due to documented injuries and must be explicitly approved in writing by the OC Fall Ball Board. Be aware this applies to multiple sport athletes and travel ball players.

6. OC Fall Ball will decide on all appeals and exceptions to player eligibility on a case-by-case basis. OC Fall Ball understands the potential for league transfers of players due to unforeseen circumstances.

#### SECTION 4: GAME FORMAT

1. SELECT
  - a. Two (2) Select games will be played consecutively (doubleheader) on each non-tournament weekend between September 10th and November 12th. These games may be day or night games and may be played on Saturday or Sunday, depending upon field availability.
  - b. The host team will be the HOME team for the first game of the double header and the visiting team will be the HOME team for the second game.
  - c. Each team is required to provide one (1) new ball and a good back-up ball for one of the Double-Header games each weekend.
  - d. Umpire fees are to be \$70 per team (\$140 total for both games) payable IN CASH at the beginning of game 1 at the plate meeting.
  - e. Drop dead at one (1) hour twenty (20) minutes in all divisions. The second game will start at the one (1) hour forty (40) mark providing a twenty (20) minute rest period between games. The score will revert to the previous inning if the home team is not ahead.
  - f. Games can end in a tie. In a tie game, if after seven innings are completed and if there is time remaining, the game may continue under the International Tie Breaker rules. Both teams must agree to continue to play, or the game will end in a tie.
  - g. NO "official" standings will be kept during the regular season of play.
  - h. Select Tournaments:
    - i. **Pumpkin Tournament:** October 10-13
    - ii. **Turkey Tournament:** November 11/14-17
2. REC
  - a. A single game will be played for recreational teams on all weekends between September 8th and November 17th. These games may be day or night games and may be played on Sunday. 14U Rec teams, should there be any, may be scheduled and allowed to play doubleheaders against other 14U Rec teams.
  - b. Each team is required to provide one (1) new or nearly new ball for each game.
  - c. Umpire fees are to be \$70 per game payable IN CASH at the beginning of the game at the plate meeting (\$35 by each team)
  - d. Drop dead at one (1) hour thirty (30) minutes in 8U through 12U divisions. 6U division games shall be drop dead at one (1) hour.
  - e. **Rec Tournament:** November 8-10.
3. Saturday games may begin at 8:00 am and end no later than 7:00 pm. Sunday games may begin at 9:00 am and end no later than 7:00 pm.
  - a. Exception: Should it be necessary, the scheduler, in consultation with the host league, may schedule Select doubleheaders to begin prior to 9:00 am (no earlier

than 8:30 am) on Sundays to accommodate field allocation end times later in the day.

- b. Tournament games are exempt from these start/end time requirements.

### **SECTION 5: EQUIPMENT**

1. Balls: Only USA Softball authorized WORTH/Rawlings softballs will be used as follows. Exceptions may be made due to availability.
  - a. 8U 10" Worth/Rawlings RIF 1
  - b. 10U 11" New Worth/Rawlings RIF10
  - c. 12U 12" Worth/Rawlings Dream Seam
  - d. 14U 12" Worth/Rawlings Dream Seam
2. Only USA approved softball equipment such as catcher's gear, bats and helmets may be used.
3. A safety base (double base) must be used at first base. If a field is not equipped with a safety base, the umpire has the option to continue the game utilizing an imaginary safety base and batter runners will be instructed to run through as though a safety base is present.
4. Base and pitching distances should be to USA standards.
  - a. 8U will use 30' pitching distance
  - b. 10U will use 35' pitching distance
  - c. 12U will use 40' pitching distance
  - d. 14U will use 43' pitching distance
5. All levels will use the base distances of 60'.

### **SECTION 6: UMPIRES, FEES & CANCELED GAMES**

1. The host league (league whose fields are being used) will be responsible to provide umpires for games. All umpires must be USA registered and background checked.
2. Tournament umpires should be OC Fall Ball approved and must be USA registered and background checked.
3. Umpire fees shall be \$70 per Select game (\$140 for the entire doubleheader) played and \$70 per Rec game played. Please make sure ALL umpires are aware –regardless of location!
4. Each team shall be responsible for payment of half of the Umpire fees IN CASH prior to the start of the games (see Section 3.1(d), 3.2(c))
5. If a game is not canceled with prior notification (See Section 6 Article 1) the team/league at fault will be responsible for paying the umpire(s).
6. Each game shall have one (1) plate umpire. Base umpire is optional and shall be agreed to by both teams prior to game time if those teams want to pay an additional fee for that 2nd umpire. Leagues are not required to pay for 2 umpires.
7. Should a team cancel for unforeseen reasons, notice must be given to the opponent no later than 6:00pm on the Thursday prior to the weekend's game or that team's league will be responsible for paying the umpire fee for the game(s) missed.
5. The host team must cancel the umpires at that time.

6. When a game is canceled, both teams must notify their respective league fall ball coordinator who will then notify the OC Fall Ball Commissioner.
7. NO make-up games will be scheduled by OC Fall Ball, however, make up games may be scheduled by the coaches on their own.
8. If games are canceled due to fields being **officially** closed by the city or field governing entity for the field to be used (for rain or other unforeseen circumstances) greater than 30 minutes prior to game time, no umpire fees will be due. If fields are closed less than 30 minutes prior to game time, teams must still pay the umpire for the game.

#### **SECTION 7: PLAYER AND GAME RULES**

1. Game rules are provided in individual division game rules documents for the respective division and level of play (SELECT or REC).

#### **SECTION 8: DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

1. Any team that has an issue or dispute with another team or league shall bring their concern to their league's Board and Fall Ball coordinator. Leagues shall work directly with each other to resolve issues or disputes within OC Fall Ball.
2. If leagues are unable to come to a mutually amicable resolution of a dispute after a good faith effort, they may refer the matter to the OC Fall Ball board.
3. OC Fall Ball Board shall have the right to disqualify a team or a league from continued participation in OC Fall Ball upon agreement by 75% or greater of the participating leagues' OC Fall Ball representatives (one vote per league).