

USSSA has implemented new rules for the testing of baseball and softball bats before a manufacturer can license a bat with USSSA. Current bats can improve with use, abuse, internal damage or by intentional altering and that improvement can exceed the BPF (Bat Performance Factor) limit for bats set by USSSA. Externally damaged bats even under current rules may be removed from play by umpires or directors. Bats that improve beyond the BPF limit cause a competitive imbalance in the game, can cause serious injury to participants and is unfair to those who have bats which comply with the USSSA BPF limit during the useful life of the bat.

Under the new rules a bat will no longer be licensed for USSSA play if it can ever improve in performance beyond the BPF limit (1.20 for softball and 1.15 for baseball) during its useful life. In addition, under the new rules manufacturers must demonstrate to USSSA that bats that are easily altered to improve the BPF will show dramatic visible damage or otherwise become unusable.

If the bat meets the new rules in lab testing, authorized USSSA manufacturers may add the new USSSA mark to the taper of the bat. Bats with the old USSSA mark are being phased out and for fastpitch the phase out period will last until December 31, 2013.

Even if a bat with the new mark passes the tests in the lab, the bat model may still be removed from USSSA play if it proves to be one which exceeds the BPF limit during actual play without showing dramatic damage. January 1, 2014 there will no longer be a list of legal fast pitch bats, just rules which require the bats be made by an authorized USSSA manufacturer and have the new mark on the taper or be made of wood.

There is no such illegal bat list at the current time. However, if a bat with the new mark is ultimately found to be illegal during play by the explanations stated above then USSSA will begin a list of such bats.

For a more extensive review of the rationale behind these rule changes, please see <http://www.ussa.com/ussa/ussa-general/AnnouncementRev82011.pdf>.