



of Iowa

2023 USA Softball of Iowa State Classification Code

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**USA Softball of Iowa
State Classification Code**

Revised – March 31st, 2023

2023 Code Changes and Points of Emphasis in Red Bold Type

Article 306 **Classification** *(back to Table of Contents)*

A. General

1. USA Softball of Iowa classification philosophy is our mission is best achieved by grouping together teams within our state who are similar in caliber to one another.
2. In judging teams, we examine their ability to compete within that class and not their ability to win that class in USA Softball Championship play. Teams are to be classified at the highest possible classification level using this standard.
3. Team classification shall be based on the roster that is submitted and the make-up of the classifications of those players on the roster as determined by the USA Softball Player Classification Database.

B. Classification Board *(back to Table of Contents)*

1. The Classification Board shall be appointed by the USA Softball of Iowa Commissioner and will consist of District Player Representatives and District Commissioners.

Meetings: The Classification Board will meet at any such time as deemed necessary to hear all appeals and review all classification appeals of players in order to submit a local recommendation to the National Slow Pitch Player Classification Board.

Authority: USA Softball of Iowa will designate a Classification Board to evaluate, classify and review team competitive levels according to the classification guidelines. The Classification Board shall have the authority to act on the following:

1. Classify players and teams prior to the beginning of the regular season play based on past performance and current season roster.
2. Review players and teams for possible reclassification prior to the appropriate USA Softball deadline.
3. Hear properly filed appeals of players and teams on their classification status by the appropriate USA Softball deadline.
4. Develop additional guidelines and regulations as the need arises.

Board Objectives: To determine proper athletic proficiency for teams, the Classification Board shall be limited to an overall comparison of all teams within the state and their finish in invitational, state and national tournament play in USA Softball or any other Softball organization.

C. [Player Classification Appeals](#) *(back to Table of Contents)*

Players classified in accordance with this article have the right to appeal their player classifications on the [USA Softball National Player Classification Database](#). The State Classification Board will assist the National Classification Board for Adult Men's, Women's, and Co-Ed Slow Pitch by providing information to assist in these decisions. When called upon to make a determination regarding a player classification USA Softball of Iowa officials will examine a variety of factors including but not limited their history in USA Softball championship play, history with other associations, softball skill level and past athletic accomplishments outside of softball and to the National Classification Board for final review. All appeals must be submitted by the player through the USA Softball Player Classification Database manager. Players should submit the following information when appealing their classification:

1. A brief statement stating the reason for the appeal. (i.e. playing ability and skill level, change in that skill level due to age or injury)
2. Evidence to support the reclassification appeal **Example:** Team Names, playing time and position, batting average and fielding percentage and Classification of other USA Softball registered teams played with or against and in what classification or level of play.

D. [Mandatory Reclassification/Restricted Classification](#) *(back to Table of Contents)*

Starting January 1st each year will start a player appeal process where each player can submit an appeal to have their player rating dropped. This process ends Aug. 1st and at that time appeals will not be accepted again until January 1st. We have taken our team procedures and based it on the USA Softball Code in which a team could have 3 Mandatory players from the next higher division on their roster. We consider our list equal to Mandatory classified players. With the player classification system that we have in place helps create a fair and level playing field for all of our teams not only at a local but also at a national level. Below are the procedures that we use on how to classify a team. Players on the USA Softball Restricted List can only participate in the Men's A or Coed Open Programs.

The following teams may have up to the following number of players on their roster:

1. Women's Class Open = Any female player.
2. Women's Class C = Three (3) Open classified players.
3. Women's Class D = Three (3) C classified players.
4. Co-Ed Open = Any Female Player and two (2) male players from the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.
5. Co-Ed Class C = No Open classified female players and no male classified players from Class A, Class B, or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.
6. Co-Ed Class D = Two (2) female C classified players and two (2) male C classified players. No Open classified female players or male players from Class A, Class B, or the USA Softball Restricted Players List.
7. Co-Ed Class E/Rec = Two (2) female D classified players and two (2) male D classified players. No Open, Class C or Class D+ classified female players or male players from Class A, Class B, Class C, Class D+ or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.

A PLAYER MAY NOT PLAY IN MORE THAN ONE CLASSIFICATION LOWER THAN THEIR CURRENT PLAYER CLASSIFICATION. A PLAYER IS CLASSIFIED TO A SPECIFIC CLASSIFICATION, UNTIL RECLASSIFIED BY THE NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION BOARD. PLAYERS WITH A + DESIGNATION ARE NOT ALLOWED TO PLAY DOWN A CLASS.

E. [Men's 12" Slow Pitch Team Classification](#) *(back to Table of Contents)*

1. [Returning Teams](#) *(back to Table of Contents)*

Returning Teams shall be defined as team that returns with 4 or more players (including pick-ups, players from any other reclassified teams of the same level, and up to three players from one classification higher than their current player classification. Players with a + designation are not allowed to play down a class.

2. [Team Restricted Classification](#) *(back to Table of Contents)*

Returning teams with two or more wins, excluding forfeits, in a National tournament must play in the same or higher classification in their next USA Softball playing season and shall be considered the same team for restricted and/or mandatory reclassification purposes.

3. [Men's 12" Slow Pitch Player Classification](#) *(back to Table of Contents)*

All men's slow pitch players participating in championship play will be individually classified. The National Softball Player Classification Board will oversee all aspects of adult slow pitch classification including those for both teams and players. USA Softball of Iowa representatives will assist the board by providing information to assist in these decisions. When called upon to make a determination regarding a player classification USA Softball of Iowa officials will examine a variety of factors including but not limited their history in USA Softball championship play, history with other associations, softball skill level and past athletic accomplishments outside of softball.

Player Rosters for championship play may include higher classified players. Players who were members of a team subject to mandatory or restricted reclassification must maintain the same classification as assigned by the mandatory or reclassified rule in their next ASA season. The number of players shall be as follows:

- a. A Class B team may not have more than 3 members who are classified as Class A Players.
- b. A Class C team may not have more than 3 members who are classified as Class B Players.
- c. A Class D team may not have more than 3 members who are classified as Class C Players.
- d. A Class E team may not have more than 3 members who are classified as Class D Players.

NOTE: A PLAYER MAY NOT PLAY IN MORE THAN ONE CLASSIFICATION LOWER THAN THEIR CURRENT PLAYER CLASSIFICATION. A PLAYER IS CLASSIFIED TO A SPECIFIC CLASSIFICATION, UNTIL RECLASSIFIED BY THE NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION BOARD. PLAYERS WITH A + DESIGNATION ARE NOT ALLOWED TO PLAY DOWN A CLASS.

4. [Mandatory Team/Player Reclassification - Iowa Men's 12" Slow Pitch Teams](#)

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Returning Teams and Players must play in the next higher classification of championship play in their next USA Softball playing season. Finishes are based on (Percentages include teams tied for a position in the bracket and are rounded up from .5 (i.e. 10% of 15 teams (1.5) is rounded up to 2 teams).

- A. In all Adult National Championships, the top finishing 10% (plus ties) will be reclassified to the next higher classification. Exception: Coed Class C and D – teams must finish in the top 10% two consecutive years. Men's Fast Pitch must finish first two consecutive years.

- B. Classes D and E: The top 10% in East and West State and top 10% in the Championship Series will be mandatory reclassified.
- C. Class C: The first and second place teams in the Class C State Tournament each year must compete in the USA Softball Class C National Tournament in the current or the next year and shall be governed by a top 20% finish in that National Tournament. Those teams not playing in the National Tournament in that two-year period will be mandatory reclassified based on the state tournament finish.

Mandatory reclassified teams must play at the next higher classification for one year before appealing to play in another classification level. NOTE: If a team fails to participate in Championship play the next calendar year this restriction will remain in effect until the team participates at the higher classification.

F. Co-Ed Slow Pitch Classification [*\(back to Table of Contents\)*](#)

- A. **Co-Ed Open** = Any Female Player and two (2) male players from the USA Softball Restricted Player’s List.
- B. **Co-Ed Class C** = No Open classified female players and no male classified players from Class A, Class B, or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.
- C. **Co-Ed Class D** = Two (2) female C classified players and two (2) male C classified players. No Open classified female players or male players from Class A, Class B, or the USA Softball Restricted Players List.
- D. **Co-Ed Class E/Rec** = Two (2) female D classified players and two (2) male D classified players. No Open, Class C or Class D+ classified female players or male players from Class A, Class B, Class C, Class D+ or the USA Softball Restricted Player's List.

G. Men’s Modified Pitch – Mandatory Reclassification/Restricted Classification [*\(back to Table of Contents\)*](#)

- a. The top 2 finishers in the Class B state tournament shall be required to move up to Class A the following season provided they have a minimum of 4 players on their roster (including pick-up players) from the previous season.
- b. Any team that wins at least 2 games in the Class A state tournament will not be allowed compete in the Class B state tournament the following season provided they have a minimum of 4 players on their roster (including pick-up players) from the previous season.

H. 16-inch and 14-inch Slow Pitch. [*\(back to Table of Contents\)*](#)

Sub-State Tournaments may be offered by each District for Men’s 16” or 14”, but participation is not mandatory for teams that want to participate in the State Tournament. Teams are Classified in State Tournament Play through the Double-Elimination “Shoot-Out” Bracket into Major, Class A and Class B.

I. Men’s Fast Pitch. [*\(back to Table of Contents\)*](#)

Teams may compete in the All-Iowa Open Men’s Fast Pitch State Tournament where all teams regardless of classification. Teams are seeded into a Pool Play and Double Elimination, 3-game guarantee bracket or “Shoot-Out” Bracket based on last year’s finish, current years league or invitational tournament results. The format of the tournament is determined by the State Commissioner. Note: Any Men’s Fast Pitch team may declare that they want to play in the Major classification for the season.

J. Junior Olympic Fast Pitch Teams. [\(back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Teams may classify themselves to levels of competition, be classified by the JO District Commissioner where they are playing league(s) or be MANDATORY RECLASSIFIED based on the USA Softball of Iowa Classification Committee using results from the teams present and past seasons of play. A player may participate as a regular rostered player on only one team within a division in championship play during a season. A team may register and participate in more than one division of play but is limited to only one classification within national Championship Finals play. **Exception:** Girl's Fast Pitch 8 & Under Coach Fast Pitch Players may also play in Girl's 10 & Under Fast Pitch.

A team that wins two or more games, excluding forfeits, in a state tournament or regional tournament may not participate in a lower classification in their next USA Softball playing season. A team that plays in the same age division that has five or more players on a roster, including pick-ups, from such a team shall be considered the same team.

The top three (3) teams in Class B and Class C from the previous year that plays in the same age division will be classified to the next higher classification in their next USA Softball playing season if that team has five (5) or more players (including pick-ups) that participated with that team.

Example - If a team that plays in 10-Under Class B finishes in the top three places in the state or regional tournament and stays in the 10-Under age division in their next USA Softball playing season they must move up to class A. If the team moves up to the 12-Under age division they may play in either class A or Class B, but are not required to move up to Class A. A team that wins at least two games in a state or regional tournament may not move down a Class provided they stay in the same age division.

Each JO District Commissioner may classify teams in their District according to: a) past performance and current season roster based on a level of play where a team will be competitive b) classification changes made by the District Commissioner will be notified in writing to the affected teams no later than June 1st of the current year. Appeals of classification changes must be made in writing within five (5) days of notification, to the State Commissioner, whose decision is final. Note: Teams that are mandatory reclassified shall not be allowed to appeal their re-classification.

The following criteria may be used as **guidelines** when evaluating teams. The JO District Commissioner will have the final say as to what class your team will be placed in based on the level where your team will be competitive, unless your team is mandatory reclassified:

Class A Teams: Have numerous skilled players. Pitcher(s) are skilled and show above average control. Players are generally recruited or selected via tryouts. Teams play in five (5) or more Invitational Tournaments, occasionally traveling out of state or more than 60 miles to tournaments. Teams generally place in the upper half of the league or tournaments that they enter, occasionally winning a tournament. Teams practice in the off-season.

Class B Teams: Have a few skilled players. Offense and Defense is limited in ability and inconsistent although Teams may play in invitational tournaments. Pitcher(s) do not control the game. All players who wish to play are welcome. Teams generally place in the upper three-fourths of the league or tournaments that they enter. Teams hold practices in the off-season. Play is mostly recreational in nature, allowing players to participate in other activities and may not devote a large amount of time to softball.

Class C/D Teams: This division has no advancement and is set up for teams that are strictly recreational in nature. These tournaments are designed to give teams with little or no tournament experience a chance to

participate in a state tournament. Players are less skilled and not as competitive as Class A/B teams. Teams do not have a desire to advance to further levels of Regional or National play.