



AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
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ASA Bat Certification Program FAQ's

Background Information:

Q: What is the ASA Bat Certification Program?

A: Under ASA Playing Rule 3, Section 1, any bat used in ASA Championship Play must contain an appropriate certification mark (except wood bats). The ASA certification mark is placed on bats under the terms of a standard contract between ASA and a participating bat manufacturer. That standard contract provides the terms and conditions that a bat manufacturer must follow before one of their products can receive the ASA certification mark. Every bat model must comply with the ASA Bat Performance Standard before those bats can receive certification marks.

Q: What is ASA Championship Play?

A: Championship Play is a tournament or competition from which the winner or the winner and other selected teams may advance to higher levels of ASA play. For more information, see Article 508, Levels of Championship Play of the ASA Code, which can be found by visiting the "About ASA" section of www.asasoftball.com.

Q: When did the ASA Bat Certification Program begin?

A: ASA started offering standard contracts to bat manufacturers in 1999, and the rule requiring certification marks on bats became effective January 1, 2000. The ASA Bat Performance Standard has been in place since 2000.

Q: How does a bat qualify for the ASA certification mark? What is the ASA Bat Performance Standard?

A: A bat is initially submitted to an ASA approved testing facility to determine its performance value. The standard contract with participating bat manufacturers requires the bat to be tested under a standard test method published by the American Society for Testing and Materials (www.astm.org). The standard contract generally allows a bat to be certified if its batted ball speed, when measured according to the ASTM F1890 standard test method, does not exceed 125 feet per second. This is known as the "ASA Bat Performance Standard".

Q: How many bats are tested before a particular model qualifies for the ASA certification mark?

A: The standard contract with participating bat manufacturers requires only a single sample bat to be tested at the ASA approved testing facility for certification purposes. Under that contract, the bat manufacturer agrees that every single bat of that model will actually comply with the ASA Bat Performance Standard.

Q: Since adopting the ASA Bat Performance Standard, what has ASA been doing about equipment regulations?

A: Through the ASA Equipment Testing and Certification Committee, ASA has conducted field testing of bats and balls to better understand the performance levels of those products and to compare bats and compare balls. The results of these field tests have led to changes in ASA Playing Rules regarding the bats and balls used in different divisions of play. The committee is also funding independent laboratory research on bats and balls, as well as a reaction time study, in an attempt to improve on the current ASA Bat Performance Standard.

Q: Why does ASA have a Bat Performance Standard?

A: Without a Bat Performance Standard, there would be little if any regulation on the maximum performance value of a bat used in ASA Championship Play. Through advancements in technology, it is currently possible to manufacture very high performing bats. Under field conditions with a given softball, a hit with one of these bats can reach a pitcher so quickly that it decreases the player's ability to appropriately react. Similar technological advancements have been made in other sports, including golf where drives off the tee are now being hit farther than ever before. ASA's intent is to limit the effect of this technology to make the game of softball more playable and more enjoyable. Addressing these advancements in technology will at the same time protect the integrity of the game by addressing the problems associated with the length of games and the number of home runs, as well as return the skills of defense to the game.

Bat Bans:

Q: What if a certified bat does not actually comply with the ASA Bat Performance Standard?

A: ASA has the right under its standard contract with participating bat manufacturers to conduct periodic and random audits of certified bats for the purpose of verifying compliance with the ASA Bat Performance Standard. Once ASA determines that a bat does not comply with that standard, ASA has the right under that contract to immediately withdraw that bat model from ASA Championship Play until further notice.

Q: I heard that ASA has banned some bats even though they had certification marks on them. Why?

A: ASA made announcements on July 31, 2002 and August 29, 2002, withdrawing certain certified bat models from ASA Championship Play until further notice. ASA learned through its periodic and random audit testing, that certain certified bats did not comply with the ASA Bat Performance Standard. One cause for some (but not all) bat models falling out of compliance is

that the manufacturer made a design change to the bat after it was initially certified, but failed to verify that the new design complied with the ASA Bat Performance Standard. Under its standard contract with participating bat manufacturers, ASA exercised its right to immediately withdraw those bat models from ASA Championship Play until further notice.

Q: Why do bats get banned in the middle of a season?

A: ASA conducts its periodic and random audit testing throughout the year, which can include the middle of a season. Sometimes audit testing is done earlier in a season, but there have been times when the ASA approved testing facilities are delayed in providing the test results. Upon receiving a test result, ASA normally takes action very quickly.

Q: The bat I own has an ASA certification mark on it, but it was banned. What should I do?

A: Under the ASA standard contract with participating bat manufacturers, the manufacturer has 30 days (or more under certain circumstances) to announce any possible method to cure the noncompliance problem. At that time, the manufacturer will provide specific instructions (including on their website) for how a noncomplying bat should be returned to the manufacturer and “recertified” and given an ASA recertification mark. If the noncompliance cannot be cured, the manufacturer’s only other options are to appeal the finding of noncompliance or to conduct a recall of the product. Regardless of the circumstance, the proper party to contact about your bat is the manufacturer of that bat.

Q: My bat has been banned. Can I use my bat in my local leagues?

A: It depends on whether your local league has adopted the ASA Playing Rules regarding equipment, and bats in particular. Technically, ASA Playing Rules and announcements regarding noncomplying bats only apply to ASA Championship Play. But because many local leagues adopt the ASA Playing Rules for their non-championship play, you need to contact your local league directly.

Q: I own a Worth 3DXFP bat. Is it banned?

A: No. Some manufacturers make many different models of bats that have very similar names, which has caused confusion about which model is actually banned. For example, Worth has a “3DX” line of bats that includes the 3DX and the 3DXFP. Only the 3DX model has been banned. If you would like additional verification that your 3DXFP is approved for use in ASA Championship Play, please go to the approved listing of Worth bats located in the certified equipment section of www.asasoftball.com.

Q: I’ve heard the ASA is going to be retesting the banned bats and will be reconsidering their decision to ban those bats. Is this true?

A: Once a bat model is withdrawn from ASA Championship Play, the only testing done is the manufacturer’s testing of possible redesigned bats to try to cure the problem. Before ASA makes any announcement on a bat model, precautionary measures are taken to make sure the test results are sound so that no reconsideration is necessary. For example, two separate rounds of

testing are done on each bat model before any public announcement is made, and each of those rounds involves different samples of that particular model.

Q: Where can I find a list of approved bats?

A: The “Certified Equipment” section of the ASA Website, www.asasoftball.com, contains a list of all approved bats as well as a list of all noncomplying bats.

Q: I’ve heard some manufacturers of banned bats talking about fixing the bats so that they comply with the ASA Bat Performance Standard and putting an ASA “**re**certification mark” on them. Can you confirm this?

A: When a bat model containing the ASA 2000 certification mark is found out of compliance with the ASA Bat Performance Standard, the manufacturer has the option to cure the problem subject to ASA’s approval of the cure method. Once ASA approves the cure method, the manufacturer will cure the problem and cause the noncomplying bat models to come into compliance. Those retrofitted bats will then be authorized to bear the ASA recertification mark, which is shown on the “ASA Banned Bats” link in the “Certified Equipment” section of the ASA Website, www.asasoftball.com.

Q: My bat has been banned. Can my bat be “recertified”?

A: Yes. Manufacturers having bats involved in the bat bans are offering to recall the bats and retrofit them at no charge to the consumer. The retrofit will ensure the bat complies with the ASA Bat Performance Standard. Contact your respective manufacturer by telephone or through their respective website for more details. These manufacturers may end their recalls soon, so be sure and contact them quickly.

Q: I have an older version of one of the models the ASA has banned. Does the ASA announcement apply to my bat even though it doesn’t bear the ASA 2000 certification mark?

A: Yes. The ASA announcement applies to all bats of the models that have been withdrawn from ASA Championship play, regardless of when the bat was manufactured (i.e. a 1998 version), and regardless of whether the bat bears the ASA 2000 certification mark. There is no practical way for an umpire or tournament official to tell the difference between bats of the same model based solely on graphic changes. Any bat of a model withdrawn from ASA Championship play must be retrofitted and contain the ASA recertification mark before it will be authorized for use again in ASA Championship play. Please visit the respective manufacturer’s website for details on their ASA-approved retrofit procedure for these bats.

Q: Will more bats be banned by the ASA?

A: If manufacturers are found to have made and sold more bat models that do not comply with the ASA Bat Performance Standard, ASA will likely have no other alternative than to issue further announcements.

Q: In ASA's audit testing of bats to make sure they comply with the ASA Bat Performance Standard, there must have been some bats that continue to pass the standard. Can you send me that list so I know what bats to buy?

A: There are bat models tested during ASA's random compliance testing that indeed continue to comply with the ASA Bat Performance Standard. However, ASA does not keep such a list. In addition, ASA intends to apply the same rules and standards to all manufacturers, and publicizing a list of those bat models could possibly give one manufacturer an unfair competitive advantage over another manufacturer just because certain bat models were randomly selected for testing and others were not. A manufacturer could also read (incorrectly) that list to mean that a model on that list will not be subject to testing again, redesign that model without verifying compliance, and then create a noncompliance situation that ASA would like to avoid.

Q: Why can't ASA test all bats before each season begins so we know which bats are banned?

A: There are many reasons, including the following: Testing all bats at a single time during the year may not be as effective as randomly testing bats throughout the year. Also, testing bats all at the same time would create a backlog at the ASA approved testing facilities, delaying many test results. The contracts between ASA and participating manufacturers speak in terms of random and periodic compliance testing instead of a testing all bats at a single time. There are significant costs involved in compliance testing, including purchasing a bat at retail and paying hundreds of dollars just to test a single bat.

Q: What has the ASA done for the players about those manufacturers who were evidently making noncomplying bats?

A: The contracts between ASA and participating manufacturers specifically state that ASA can conduct random compliance testing, and ASA has repeatedly exercised that right. Once it is determined that a manufacturer's bat for some reason no longer complies with the ASA Bat Performance Standard, immediate action is taken. Although some disruption in the field may result from such quick action, ASA's intent is to look out for the best interests of the players of our great sport.

Q: I've heard that ASA is going to ban all composite bats. Is this true?

A: The ASA rules and regulations regarding bats are based on the performance level of the bat, not what it is made of. ASA currently has no intent to ban all bats made of a particular material. Instead, the intent is that if changes are to be made, ASA will most likely make adjustments to the ASA Bat Performance Standard and continue to regulate bats based on their performance characteristics.