

Positive Sports Training, Inc

USSSA
Youth Baseball League

2024 Handbook



“The BEST in Youth Baseball”

www.pstbaseball.com

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**Positive Sports Training, Inc. Handbook
2024**

Welcome to USSSA baseball and Positive Sports Training, Inc - The *BEST* in youth baseball. Positive Sports Training, Inc., is the governing body for the Eastern Iowa United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) Youth Baseball League. Founded in the early 80s originally as a Continental America Baseball Association (CABA) league, the league has evolved into one of the major youth baseball organizations in the State of Iowa.

Our league consists of an Executive Board, Advisory Board and numerous teams and volunteers.

Executive Board Members

<i>President</i>	
Jim Lizarraga jim@pstbaseball.com	7501 Towerstone Court NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52411 Home: (319)393-4806, Cell:(319)350-2133 Fax: (319)365-0676
<i>Vice President</i>	
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<i>Master Scheduler</i>	
Deanna Lizarraga pstumpires@gmail.com Deanna@pstbaseball.com	7501 Towerstone Court NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52411 Cell: (319) 651-5755

Executive Board members are nominated for terms of three years. There are currently no term limits. They are responsible for setting and enforcing the rules and regulations of Positive Sports Training stated in this document and otherwise changed and/or modified by said board.

USSSA

Positive Sports Training (PST) is a member of USSSA (United States Specialty Sports Association). Each team will declare if they are an A, AA, AAA or Major team, and pay a yearly membership fee. You can register your team by going to www.ussa.com. All PST members will receive 300pts from USSSA.

Any Player who before May 1st of the current season reaches an age above the level which he plays is not eligible to participate in that division. Example: If you play in the 10U division, you cannot turn 11 before May 1st of that season. See rule IV of USSSA rules.

USSSA age restrictions for 13U & 14U divisions

The new divisions will be a combination of age based and school grade based. The main cutoff date of April 30 will remain the same. We will now include a provision for grade base participation. The grade bases are 7th grade for 13U and 8th grade for 14U, with a maximum age limit.

The rule will read as:

14U Division

Players who turn 15 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible unless they are in the 8th grade. Also, any player turning 16 prior to May 1 will not be eligible.

13U Division

Players who turn 14 prior to May 1 of the current season are not eligible unless they are in the 7th grade. Also, any player turning 15 prior to May 1 will not be eligible.

USSSA TEAM CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

Iowa team classifications are based on Iowa USSSA Baseball program and not nationally. Iowa team classifications are based on power ratings, tournament results and by overall team performance on the field.

Any team that is reforming from the 2023 season must start the 2024 season in the same classification (or higher) that they finished the 2023 season unless otherwise noted in 2024 team classification.

For purpose of classifications, if six (6) or more players from a 2023 team are on a 2024 team, they are considered the same team regardless of **TEAM NAME, MANAGER, COACHING STAFF** or **SPONSOR**.

The State Office will make final classification adjustments by the 1st of June of each season. This should give teams ample time to prepare for State and World Series plans.

Major Classification

Top 5% - 10% of the teams in the state.
Best teams in the state
Can Compete with Major teams in region.

AAA Classification

Upper middle 20% - 35% of the teams in the state.
Traveling teams
Tryout teams

AA Classification

Lower middle 30% - 45% of the teams in the state.
Limited travel schedule
Players from same local area.

A Classification

Remaining 10% - 20% of the teams in the state.
School teams
Limited playing schedule
Local tournaments

Drafted League Classification

Teams formed from drafted leagues.
Little League teams

Undoubtedly, not everyone will agree with classifications. Any team wishing to appeal a reclassification may do so after playing a minimum of three USSSA tournament games after January 1, 2024 against teams in their new classification. Once the results for these games have been posted to the USSSA.com system, a review will be completed to determine if the team is competitive at the new level.

The term "competitive" is and always will be subjective. A team that plays a little below or above .500 in any classification is competitive. A team that loses every game by one run is also competitive.

IMPORTANT!!

Do your part to help the accountability of the USSSA system. View the rosters of the teams in your age division *before* you play them to make sure that they are compliant with roster rules. Tournament Directors are also being told this is a requirement of them hosting USSSA events now. The class system of play works if you are part of the accountability mechanism. USSSA is the only organization in the country that can make class play work as it should and monitor it.

Complete USSSA rules can be found on their web site: www.ussa.com or www.iowaussa.com. See exceptions under "Game Procedures."

Iowa USSSA State Director: Bob Egr
2714 Caulder Ave Des Moines, IA 50321
Tel# 515-256-0490 fax# 800-966-0637
e-mail: bob@iowaussa.com.

Age Commissioners

Every age group shall have a volunteer commissioner for the A, AA, and AAA/Major divisions as necessary and possible. The commissioner's duties include; aiding in the scheduling process, recording and reporting the league standings and helping to determine USSSA status for new and existing teams in their respective age groups.

Baseballs

Baseballs can be pre-ordered during the online registration for \$45.00 per dozen. School Based or Clubs (i.e. Reds, Cougars, Saints) who will be ordering 10 dozen or more will be required to order offline by contacting the league Secretary. Each ball has the USSSA Logo on it. You are not required to buy balls through the league. Teams will each have to provide 2 **Diamond DOL-1 baseballs or equivalent** to the umpire for league games, which you will get back. Many tournaments also require that you provide 2 or 3 new balls when checking in.

Cancellations

Cancellations will only be made in very extreme situations. Notification should be given ASAP and only rare exceptions will be accepted. You need to exhaust all avenues to fulfill your commitment. (Example: If your #1 and #2 pitcher throw too much that weekend, then you're going to have to use pitcher 3 and 4; the head coach can't be there, then the assistants or parents are going to have to cover; your catcher is out of town and took the gear, then you're going to have to use some one else and borrow some). **If there is cancellation and that game can not be made up or rescheduled the team that forced the cancellation shall repay the opposing teams fees for that game and pay the league \$50.00 cancellation fee.**

When cancellations occur call:

- The Opposing Team
- The Master Scheduler (pstumpires@gmail.com) to change the master schedule.
- The field manager to correct the field schedule
- The age commissioner
- Copy an e-mail to Treasurer and the President.

Consistent problems with a team in this area will result in a dismissal from the league with no refunds given.

Schedule Changes

Schedule changes can be made on a mutually agreeable basis. Meaning BOTH teams agree to reschedule a game already set in the master schedule. If a new location is needed and not available through the efforts of the teams involved, the Master Scheduler pstumpires@gmail.com will need to be contacted to check available fields. BEFORE you contact the Master Scheduler, have two or three dates in mind.

If you have a field, please notify the Master Scheduler pstumpires@gmail.com of the changes ASAP. We need to keep the master schedule up to date throughout the year.

Rain Outs

To Check Field Status:

After 3:00pm Call 319-286-5700 For Ellis, Tait and Noelridge.

After 3:00pm Call 319-242-7377 For Lowe Park

After 3:00pm Call 319-846-1699 For Fairfax Fields

After 3:00pm Go to website for Prospect Meadows rain out status

Call the Home Field Coach for games scheduled on fields NOT managed by PST.

(Don't assume the game is cancelled, if in doubt, . . . SHOW UP!)

To Cancel a game due to Inclement Weather:

- 1) Before 5:00pm Email the Master Scheduler pstumpires@gmail.com . **After 5:00pm (Late Cancellation) Call the Master Scheduler at 319-651-5755.**
 - Coaches not responsible to pay umpire(s) if cancelled in advance due to weather.
 - If umpires arrive at scheduled location but game does not start due to weather, coaches are responsible to pay each umpire \$25.00.
- 2) Contact the opposing team.

Once the game is in progress, the umpire determines playability. If lightning is present, the game must be suspended **immediately** (not one out or a ½ inning later). If game is suspended the umpires still get paid.

To Re-Schedule

- 1) Contact the opposing coach to determine two or three possible make-up dates. E-mail the Master Scheduler pstumpires@gmail.com to see if there are any fields available, if needed. If a field is required and scheduled, the Master Scheduler is responsible for contacting and scheduling umpires for the makeup. They do not have to be the umpires scheduled for the original game(s).

Suspended Games – Lightning

At any time, during any warm-ups or a game, if lightning is spotted by anyone, (players, parents, managers or umpires), play will immediately be suspended and all players shall leave the field. Players are not to sit in the dugouts or under nearby trees, but should go to the nearest shelter or automobile. Managers, coaches and parents are responsible for keeping the players in a safe area. That does not mean running around near the fields or in the parking lots. Have them get to safety and

stay there until an all clear is given or the game is cancelled. Do not stay under trees. Return to the parking lots and stay in your automobiles.

Thirty-minute Rule – Once lightning has been recognized, it is recommended to wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard. Given the average rates of thunderstorms travel, the storm should move 10-12 miles away from the area. This significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes. Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count should reset the clock and another count should begin.

Flash to Bang – This method is used to access how far away lightning is striking. It is determined by counting the number of seconds it takes to hear a clap of thunder after witnessing a flash of lightning. The number of seconds is then divided by five to get the distance, in miles, to the lightning flash. Generally a 30 second or less flash-to-bang count suggests removal of the athletes from the field to a safe shelter is advisable.

Conduct

All coaches are required to sign a Code of Conduct/Ethics Waiver. This waiver is now part of the online registration process and must be agreed upon and signed in order to register.

Coaches Conduct: You are a role model. Not every call will be perfect, nor will every play go your way. Always show sportsmanship and set a positive example for not only your players, but also parents. Judgment calls are at the discretion of the umpire, and yes there is always going to be a questionable call. Questioning an umpire on an interpretation or explanation of a rule should be done appropriately showing professionalism and respect.

As the head coach, it is your responsibility to control the behavior of your other coaches, players and your parents. If any of your players demonstrate poor sportsmanship, for example by throwing bats, helmets or swearing, the umpire has authority to warn the player first, then the coach. If the behavior continues, the player, coach or parent will be ejected from the game and/or asked to leave the area around the field. **If said Head Coach or team cannot control the behavior, the offending team may be penalized with the forfeiture of the game.** The responsibility is yours to deal with the situation and shouldn't have to fall on the umpires. The same is true for unruly parents or your assistant coaches.

Use of alcohol or tobacco products during games or on the playing field is **prohibited**. Any situation regarding inappropriate behavior by coaches or umpires should be reported to a member of the Executive Board to investigate. After all information is gathered and if determined to be founded, **any of the following disciplinary action can and will result:**

1st Offense - a warning will be issued

2nd Offense - a one-week suspension from all league activities

3rd Offense - person will be asked to leave their position in the league. In the case of parents, they will be asked to no longer attend games.

Parent Conduct: Positive cheering or even disappointed reactions are part of being a fan, but insist that your parents or spectators don't, 1) coach from the stands, 2) heckle the umpires, and 3) make negative demeaning comments about the other team in an outspoken manner.

Player Conduct: You should not only be teaching good baseball, but also good sportsmanship. This can be achieved by enforcing rules, discipline and positive examples. Players throwing gloves, helmets, or bats; swearing, disrespecting umpires or other players should be encouraged to observe some time with the coach... on the bench.

No jewelry or exposed body piercing of any kind will be allowed. **Medical or religious jewelry may be allowed as long as it is concealed or taped to the body.**

Equipment

a. Metal spikes are prohibited for ages 12 and below.

b. Catchers must wear protective gear: chest protector, shin guards, cup and mask (skull caps no longer allowed – must be hockey style). **Catchers Mask must be worn for any plays being made at home plate, players must not remove their helmet while the ball is considered live. Catchers Mask must be worn by any player warming up a pitcher.**

c. All players, even players coaching bases, bat boys and girls must wear batting helmets when outside the dugout. Players called out, at home or at any base, must not remove their helmet until in the dugout.

d. USSSA or USA stamped bats will be the only bats allowed for league games. BBCOR -3 bats are allowed for U14 and U15 players. Any player found to be using an illegal bat shall be removed from the game and said bat removed from game play. Bat inspections and illegal bats will be determined by the game umpire and the umpires ruling will stand on the field. Please refer to the USSSA website for any bat restrictions.

e. **NEW – U13 Bat Maximum Drop Change:** Starting January 1, 2020, our 13U division will have a new bat limit. A maximum of drop 8 (-8) will be the new bat restriction for the 13U age group. This will only apply to 13u events and teams playing in 13U events.

Go to: <https://www.iowaussabaseball.com/single-post/2019/10/02/13U-Bat-Standard-Changes>

Fees

Registration Fee: Every team is charged a \$325.00 Registration fee. This fee helps the league to financially support scheduling, Umpire scheduling, Umpire Training, Tournament fees and support, Field Rentals, Insurance, Business expenses, Equipment, Etc.

Game Fee: There is a fee \$25.00 per game scheduled, to pay for field usage. If you are the home team and playing on your home diamond, then your fee is waived, and you get a \$25.00 credit from the visiting team. **Example 1:** Your home field is Mt Vernon, you schedule 5 games @ home and 10 games away - you owe \$125.00. **Example 2:** You have no home field and play all your 15 games away - you owe \$375.00. **Example 3:** You play 10 games @ your own field and 5 games away; the league owes you \$125.00

USSSA Fee: The league is a member of USSSA, PST requires all U9 – U14 teams to have a USSSA number. For League play 7U and 8U are not required by PST to register USSSA. The fee is \$55.00 for all teams, regardless of your determined/registered level of play – i.e. A, AA, AAA or Major. Register and pay on-line at www.ussa.com.

Insurance: Every team must have insurance. It can be purchased through USSSA or from a private party of your choosing. See more details under “Insurance” header later in this publication.

Game Procedures

Pre-Game: Contact the opposing coach and verify Game Time, Date and Location. Go to <http://www.pstbaseball.com/Master-Schedule.html> and cross reference your game with the Master Schedule. Umpires have been assigned to your game, if there are any changes to umpires you will be contacted prior to the game from the Master Scheduler.

Always have your Coaches Contact information, birth certificates, insurance certificate(s), and first-aid kit with you at all games and practices.

Game Warm-up: Teams should arrive early to get properly stretched, check field conditions and setup. Give the opposing team your lineup at least 15 minutes prior to start time, discuss with opposing team and umpires the rules and terms of the game or games. Examples of discussion:

- 1) If your team is participating in league standings and you are playing a double header, does the first or second game count toward standings.
- 2) Are you going to play/bat your entire roster.

Coaches or Team Managers MUST pay the umpires prior to the game starting.

Teams may warm up in the outfield but the infield is never used for warm up unless both teams agree to take infield prior to the game start time.

Game Rules: The league uses USSSA rules, which can be printed from their web site www.ussa.com or www.iowaussa.com. Some younger age groups use new modified rules, check with your age commissioner to review modified rules.

Safe-Base (Double First Base)

The batter-runner should use the orange base on initial plays at first base, unless the fielder is drawn to the orange base (because of a dropped third strike) in which case the batter runner would go to the white base. Only on a dropped third strike may the fielder touch the orange or white base to retire a batter runner. Any other plays at first base other than a dropped third strike, the fielder must touch the white base or the runner in order to retire a batter/runner. The runner may touch the white or orange base on a dropped third strike, depending on the fielder’s coverage of first base. The fielder must use the white base to retire a batter runner, except on a dropped third strike. A batter runner is never out for touching the white base rather than the orange base, when touching first base the first time. Once the batter runner reaches first base, the batter runner must always return to the white base.

Game Length: 8-12U games are 6 innings or 1 Hour 30 Min. which ever comes first with no new inning starting after 1 Hour 30 Min. 13U-14U games are 7 innings or 1 hour 45 Min. whichever comes first with no new inning starting after 1 hour 45 Min.. 7 inning games can be modified if daylight restrictions exist. Both teams must agree to the changes. You can either limit the games to 1-1/2 hour as stated above and/or play two 5 or 6 inning games. If a shortened game is agreed to, there is no modification allowed after the start of the game.

Balks: In ages 10 and below, pitchers will be allowed some leniency in regards to balks. Pitchers will be called for major violations and warned for minor violations that do not affect the outcome of the game. 11U and above will be enforced.

Home team shall be decided by coin flip or by some mutually agreeable arrangement. (Usually if playing a double header, the teams switch as the home team the second game.)

PST also encourages that for league play; you bat your entire roster and not conform to the 9 player 1 EP rule (if one team doesn't want to play entire roster they cannot prevent the other team from doing so).

Show good sportsmanship and if the score is one sided stop stealing bases, change your players around, throw someone that usually doesn't pitch, **don't humiliate the other team**. Sometimes it can be touchy to decide, especially at early ages because the score can vary 10 runs in an inning. Just be aware and try to do the right thing. **Treat your competitors like you would want to be treated.**

Injury

Coaches are encouraged to purchase or put together small medical kits (Band-Aids, antiseptics, ice packs, towels, etc.) You should also carry with you to all games and practices, emergency contact information and numbers for each player AND coach.

All coaches should have a method of contacting and directing emergency personnel to the scene of an injury. Having someone on your staff that is CPR or first-aid trained would be very beneficial. Error on the side of caution when dealing with an injury.

Any claim against insurance should be directed to the League Secretary's attention. Claims cannot be processed without a pre-signed valid insurance waiver. **ANY AND ALL SERIOUS INJURIES NEED TO BE REPORTED TO THE LEAGUE PRESIDENT ASAP AFTER IT HAPPENS – REGARDLESS OF INSURANCE CLAIM.**

Insurance

Every team must have insurance – this is **mandatory**. Insurance can be purchased through USSSA or by another provider. Every player and coach must sign an insurance waiver and have it on file with Positive Sports Training before any activity begins – including practice. **Having a signed waiver on file is a mandatory condition of participation in the league.**

League Standings

All teams must participate in league standings by playing every team in their division a predetermined equal amount of times. U14's are the only age group that will not be required to participate. The amount of games for standings is determined each year depending on number of teams that are in each age group. Teams can play any team in or out of their division and/or age group only after meeting their league game requirements. Teams that choose to play teams outside of the league must use their own fields and umpires. Scores need to be reported to the age group commissioners every Sunday from the games played the prior week. They will be recorded and sent to the Website Manager James Tipton to update league standings on the PST Website.

League Tournament

The league tournament for 2024 is scheduled for May 6th & 7th A, AA, AAA, Major divisions will be offered. PST Executive Board will be in charge of this tournament. All net profits come back to the league in order to keep league registration affordable to all teams. It is not a requirement to participate in this tournament whether you participate in league standings or not. The Tournaments is open to all league and non-league teams.

Registration

Registration for the 2024 season will be online at the Positive Sports Training Inc. website. (<http://www.pstbaseball.com>). All league fees will be paid online either by individual teams or by their programs administration or program treasurer. USSSA registration number will be required for league registration. All online registrations must be completed prior to the January 15th deadline in order to avoid late fees. Late registration will be allowed from January 15th thru the 31st. All late entries will be charged an additional \$100.00 administration fee.

All new teams must meet the 50% rule. All teams who are new to the league must request an application from the President. To qualify, a team must show that it can provide a home field which meets the minimum dimensions as stated in the USSSA rules for its age group for which it is applying. This team must show that it has full access and can schedule a minimum of 50% of all its scheduled games on its home field. Final approval of said application must be reviewed and approved at its discretion by the President. Exceptions for league play will be made on a case by case basis approved by the League President.

Scheduling

Make a team calendar and bring it to each meeting. Block off all your tournament dates and any other dates that your team members won't be available. 13U and 14U coaches have to remember that school track can be a conflict. Keep in mind if scheduling double headers that school is not out until the first week in June. Double check your calendar with the opposing team calendar and the master calendar. Verify all have the same information which should include both team names, age, date, time, place, single game or double header and if umpire/umpires needed. If participating in league standings, schedule with the other teams in your division first. You can schedule outside of your division and outside of your age group if you so desire. League games will commence on the first day of April and run to the last day of July. See the "Cancellations" section.

Umpires

We have a Umpire-in-Chief to help recruit, train and schedule umpires for our league and its participants. The Umpire-in-Chief is a paid position in the Positive Sports Training organization. The person holding this position has the final say under the Executive Board regarding all umpires and umpiring issues.

For younger ages 8U, 9U, 10U, 11U(A,AA) only one umpire will be scheduled unless specifically requested, umpires may be moved or extra umpire pulled if the Master Scheduler determines the need. 11U(AAA) and 12U(A,AA,AAA), Shall have two umpires. We will be utilizing Adult umpires for all games. Jr. Umpires May be used in certain situations but they will be personally selected by the chief umpire for field command and rules training. They will be used for 8u-10u age groups when we need umpires. 13U and above, which are played on regulation sized diamonds, shall always have two umpires. The league will utilize certified umpires, certification will be administrated by IAHSAA or PST.

Please refer below for specific examples of umpire fee schedules.

Examples:

PST Certified = \$55.00 per game

IAHSAA Certified = \$55.00 per game

13U/14U PST Certified = \$60.00 per game

13U/14U IAHSAA Certified = \$60.00 per game

Travel outside Greater Cedar Rapids area will receive \$5.00 extra per game

****When canceling one hour or less due to weather, coaches pay umpires 50%**

****When cancelling for other reasons 100%; once game starts 100%**

Coaches or Team Managers MUST pay the umpires prior to the game.

Have a pre-game conference with the opposing coach and umpire to go over rules of the game. See “Game Procedures.”

Umpires are human and make mistakes. It always seems to be easier to call the game from the bench or stands than on the field. **Getting and keeping umpires is a very difficult task.** If anyone thinks it could be a rewarding experience for them, please contact the Umpire-in-Chief for information. See “Rules of Conduct” section.

Websites

Positive Sports Inc. – <http://www.pstbaseball.com>

League Registration - <http://www.pstbaseball.com> located on the main page

USSSA National – www.usssa.com

USSSA Iowa – www.iowausssa.com

Have a great season and good luck to all of you!