

SOFTBALL UMPIRES OF MARYLAND

Websites: mdumps.com
State: www.usssa1.com
National: www.usssa.com

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To: All Maryland State FastPitch Tournament Umpires
From: John Dye, State UIC
Re: 2021 USSSA FastPitch Softball Season

What a difference a year makes! Welcome to what we hope will be the 2021 FastPitch Softball. The tournaments are scheduled to start March 27. On paper, it looks to be a busy year. Expect COVID-19 changes to almost everything.

Registration: The registration fee which includes all USSSA national and state fees is \$80. If you wish to take advantage of the optional USSSA All Association insurance, there is an additional \$25 charge. This year USSSA is offering a registration with NO insurance. It is intended for officials who already have insurance through another source like NASO (note USA Softball insurance does not cover USSSA games). SUM does not recommend this option. If you wish to do this, you must register yourself at usssa.com/officials. Click on Register as a 2020 USSSA Official (Even though the year is wrong). There is a self-registration link available on mdumps.com. In any event, I would appreciate you returning the attached registration form (available also on mdumps.com) with payment if not self-registered.

Notes on filling out the form: if you haven't moved or changed your phone/email check that your basic information is unchanged and leave that section blank. We only expect the Experience section to be filled in by new umpires or new to SUM.

Background Checks: Background checks through USSSA are required annually for registration as a USSSA Umpire. The cost of the background check is part of the umpire fee. After submitting your registration, you will receive an email from USSSA requesting background information.

Clinic: We are asking all Umpires to reserve the **First Saturday in March (March 6)** for our annual clinic. Because of COVID, we will not be having an in-person session. We are planning on a Zoom session. Details on how to participate will be further coming.

Umpire Orientation / Training Classes: Our training classes are underway and will continue on Saturdays throughout February. With the unavailability of CCBC Catonsville, we are fortunately to be able to have these sessions in the Arbutus Town Hall. Thanks to Mark Sadowski and the Arbutus Community Association for allowing us to hold these. Rick Morris is leading the training. Please contact him at 443-299-9865, wvmdmorris@gmail.com for more information.

Arbiter: As you all know, we use the Arbiter online assignment system. We will continue to use Arbiter this year. Our Scheduler, John Remmell, in addition to John Calamari, and Al Palmer are willing to provide individual help. We purge game and pay records annually and will do so this year on the Ides of March. So, if you need 2020 info for tax purposes do it before March 15th.

Rules: Although the plan was to print the rule book every two years, there will not be a printed rule book this year. There are no 2021 rule changes So hang on to your 2019 rule book with 2020 rule changes. If you need the 15th edition 2019 rule book, let me know. We have plenty. Remember there were significant pitching rule changes last year after the book was printed. There is a 2020 insert (attached) available on our site. Also, the Case Book and Clarifications and Interpretation are on-line and there are a couple of Maryland generated documents on USSSA rules and rule differences on the Maryland website, mdumps.com.

Bat Marks: USSSA has introduced a new official bat mark. The beloved thumbprint will still be legal.

Any bat not displaying the USSSA 2014 or NEW 2020 BPF mark on the taper, will be ruled a Non-Approved Illegal bat.



Still Legal



New Bat Mark



Illegal – Slowpitch

Uniforms: See mdumps.com/uniform.html for complete uniform requirements. Boombah (www.boombah.com) has the contract as the official supplier of USSSA licensed Umpire uniforms through the end of 2021. There are rumors and guesses as to what will happen in 2022 but there has been no definitive announcement. Boombah provides the polos and a black pullover jacket. In addition, the USSSA short sleeve pullover (tucked in) is authorized at the State level. CA Sports Promotions (casports.biz) is our source for the official New Era hats. Boombah does stock a black billed USSSA hat but only in a combo Flex Fit. SUM has a limited supply of Richardson mesh hats.

Pre-Season Tune-up: Catonsville Community College is not hosting the indoor youth RBI fastpitch scrimmages this year.

Nationals: USSSA East will be hosting Nationals in Salisbury and Sterling VA. There will again be three sessions at Salisbury (July 13-18; July 20-25; and July 26-31) and the “C” Nationals at Sterling (July 14-18). So, there will be Umpire assignments. There are other National opportunities as USSSA has many throughout the country. Sites and dates are posted at ussa.com. Umpire berths will be based on performance, attitude, appearance, knowledge of the rules, test results and attendance at the clinics. Contact me, dye@mdumps.com, if interested.

Test: This year the test is online. Go to mdumps.com and click “Take the Test”. All Umpires planning on working the USSSA tournament schedule and to be eligible to be recommended for Nationals will be expected to take the test.

In the past we have held test sessions sometime after the State clinic. We will let you know our plans for this year a little later.

Pay: Umpire game fees will remain at \$50 per game in 2021. The method of payment will remain the same, weekly mailed checks. Pennsylvania West is going to Pay At the Plate. However, USSSA East is examining this but is not prepared to transition to that method this summer.

Websites: the Maryland Umpire Page is mdumps.com. It links to usssa1.com, the Maryland/Delaware website, usssa.com, the National USSSA site and the National Umpire Page (usssa.com/officials) For those of you who like to plan ahead, the 2021 summer schedule is posted.

Finally, all of us on the state staff look forward to working with you this year. Our goal is to continue to provide the many USSSA teams with the best Umpires possible. Good luck from the state staff on a successful season.

Enclosures:

2021 Registration Form

2020 USSSA Rule Changes Insert