

USSSA Sponsor, Owner and Manager Altered Bat Policies and Procedures

1. **USSSA Altered Bat Policy.** It is apparent that the altered bat policy of the USSSA and the potential catastrophic impact of using such bats have not yet been made clear to the players, managers, sponsors and teams of the USSSA Conference. While the Conference players have to date been treated with the respect that the level of play would indicate is appropriate, recent events have shown that a more vigilant policy will be required. **The altered bat cheating ends now!**
2. **Un-sponsored Bats.** Pursuant to the USSSA Constitution and Rules, USSSA Directors have the right to ask to inspect and then ask to take any bat that is in a USSSA facility. This applies whether the bat is in use or in a player's or a team bag. Once the request is made, the Owner of the bat must decide whether he wants to allow the testing of the bat to determine whether it is altered or not. If he decides that he does not, he gets to keep his bat and leave the USSSA facility immediately with a one year suspension from all USSSA activities. In addition, any one who has used that bat is also suspended for up to one year. If the Owner believes his bat has not been altered, then the Owner may let USSSA take the bat and make the determination. If the bat is then determined to be altered, the Owner and any one who used the bat may receive up to a two year suspension.
3. **Sponsored Bats.** For bats provided by bat manufacturers as sponsorship to a player or a team, the rules are a bit different. Per agreement with the bat manufacturers, USSSA may take such bats at any time they are in a USSSA facility, and the player who has possession of the bat cannot refuse the request. The suspension for a player who possesses or uses a bat that is determined to be altered however, is only up to one year.
4. **Second Time Offenders.** Second time offenders of any of the USSSA Altered Bat Rules may be suspended for life from USSSA activities.
5. **When Will USSSA Take a Bat?** Effective immediately, spot bat inspections will occur at all Conference events. The inspection decision will be made by the USSSA. The inspections may be random or they may be made because the bat looks, sounds or performs suspiciously. In short, they may be taken for any reason that the USSSA deems in its complete and absolute discretion is appropriate. There is currently no Bat Protest granted to teams playing in USSSA. When an on-field (yes/no) compression testing machine is available, USSSA will consider for Conference play the addition of a Bat Protest right.
6. **Cooperation and Unsportsmanlike Conduct.** In addition to the potential for player altered bat suspensions, any one who does not fully cooperate with such inspections will be subject to suspension for unsportsmanlike conduct. This includes other players, coaches, sponsors, team owners or even fans who argue about an inspection, as well as those who try to remove/switch a bat that is about to be inspected. The arguing and complaining when a bat is taken is over.
7. **Yes, This includes Any Bat in a USSSA Facility.** The ability of the USSSA to inspect bats by virtue of the USSSA Constitution includes the inspection of bats used in play, bats in the dugout, bats in a bat bag and even bats just found anywhere in a USSSA ball park. This includes bats even if they are still in the player's or team bag that have not been used in the USSSA event. As such, even if you just forget and bring in your altered practice bat to a USSSA event, you could be suspended under the altered bat rules.

8. **No Fault Liability.** And everyone needs to remember that the Altered Bat rules are No-Fault rules. The Altered Bat suspensions do not require knowledge that the bat was altered. Own one, use one, and you will be suspended. You are responsible for making sure your equipment is legal. If not, you will be suspended.

9. **Assisting Those That Use Unauthorized Equipment.** In addition, teams, bat doctors, managers or bat manufacturers (or their employees or associates) who in any way participate or assist in the use of unauthorized equipment can also be suspended for up to a year for unsportsmanlike conduct.

10. **Altered Bat Suspension in Conference Play.** While there has been openness in the past to negotiate a lesser penalty, it is the current intent of the USSSA Altered Bat Committee to impose in most cases the full penalties available. As such, the suspension for first time offenders of the altered bat rules should expect to be suspended for 1 or 2 years. And the second time offenders should expect to be suspended for life.

11. **The Risks of Non-Compliance.** The competitive balance of the game demands these rules be enforced. And for those with assets to risk, it should not need to be mentioned that the liability ramifications of using illegal, performance-enhancing equipment could be catastrophic to your financial health. While it would seem fair that the person who cheated (used the altered bat, owned the altered bat or did the altering) would be the only one running this risk, the legal system has a clear tendency to pull in those who are tangentially involved, such as a coach or sponsor. Particularly, if the potential law suit defendants have assets to pursue. As such, it makes no rational sense for anyone to allow this to continue.

12. **Major Sponsor/Owner Commitments.** Indeed, I now have the commitment of each of the Majors Teams owners that they will not tolerate cheating by their players. They will tear up the contracts of cheaters and they will not let them play on their teams ever again. In the near future, I will be asking for a commitment from each of the Conference teams to help put an end to use of altered bats in the Conference.

13. **To run the risk of repeating myself, the cheating stops now.**

14. **Players Explanation.** Attached is a shorter version of these policies and procedures and I would appreciate it if you would see to it that your players each receive a copy before this weekend.