

Note about team registrations and tournaments after August 1

The softball "year" for USSSA runs from August 1 to July 31. That means that tournaments scheduled after August 1 are considered 2013 events and in order to participate in them a team must be registered for 2013. In short, all the teams that were created and all rosters that were submitted for the 2012 season will expire on July 31, 2012.

Under the USSSA system (ISTS), a manager establishes a one-time account, and then creates teams under that account from year to year. On or shortly after July 1 managers should create a 2013 team, particularly if they plan on playing any USSSA tournaments in August, September or October. Otherwise, they can certainly wait until next year to create their team.

When a manager creates a 2013 team, he/she will then need to enter their roster online just as they did for 2012, then print off the roster, get each player and parent to sign it and submit it to the state office. One thing that makes entering your roster easier the second time around is that any player that previously played on a team that the manager has under their account will already be in the system. If the manager wants to retain that player for 2013 (or at least the fall of 2012) then all he/she has to do is highlight the player under the "Add Former Player" section and hit the button.

Now, here's the catch. The age cut off is still based on the calendar year, however the age eligibility for 2013 teams will change beginning August 1, 2012. The best way to explain this is with an example. Let's say we have a team that played 14U in 2012. They have a mix of players born in 1997 (roster 14 year olds) and 1998 (roster 13 year olds). If they want to keep playing 14U in the fall of 2012 they will not be able to create a 2013 14U team then add any player that was born in 1997, because that player now is considered a roster 15 year old. What the manager needs to do in this situation is to create their 2013 team as a 15U team. That way he/she can keep all the 1996 players for the fall. Tournament-wise we're going to combine all 14U and 15U teams in the fall because that's the group that played against one another in the spring and summer.

A 14U team was used in the above example, but the same applies to the 10U and 12U as well. In other words a 10U manager with 2000 players should create an 11U team and a 12U manager with 1999 players should create a 13U team. Then come tournament time this fall we'll combine the 10U and 11U teams (playing under 10U rules) and combine the 12U and 13U teams. 16U is a slightly different story because USSSA doesn't have a 17U division. A manager with 1994 players will have to register as an 18U team. Most of the time that won't matter because in the fall we often combine 16U and 18U age brackets anyway. In cases where we don't, we'll simply open up the tournament to 18U teams, but make sure that only 1995 players and younger are on their roster.

If a manager creates an odd year team for the fall (11U, 13U or 15U), then come next spring they have three options:

1. If they really want to play next spring as a one year younger team, then they should email the state director to have them reclassified as such after the fall season is finished. That is, let's say a 14U team in 2012 decides they want to play out the rest of the fall with their current players which include 1997 girls. They would register as a 15U in the fall. However, if next year they really intend to be a 14U team again, then upon the manager's request we would reclassify them as a 14U team and they would have to delete all the 1997 girls from their roster.
2. If they want to play next spring as a one year older team, then they would have to let their state director know that as well. Following the above example, if a team registers as a 15U team in the fall, but then next spring wants to pick up players born in 1996, then we would have to reclassify them as 16U.
3. They can do nothing and just stay as an 11U, 13U or 15U team for the spring/summer of 2013.

There are two other side issues to all of this.

Insurance. Generally speaking, most team's insurance – at least the policies purchased through the various softball associations – runs through December 31. That will not be affected by USSSA's "fiscal" registration year. In other words, a team's current policy will remain in effect until the end of the year, as long as the team is essentially the same. If a 12U team becomes a 13U team in the fall, but otherwise carries the same team name, then their 2012 coverage will apply. However, if the team name completely changes then a new policy would be required. But keep in mind that some associations, including USSSA, offer half priced policies after August 1.

Player pickup policy. We realize that many teams and players use the fall as a "trying out" period, such that neither managers nor players necessarily want to be locked onto one another until July 31, 2013 just because they played in an August 2012 tournament. Therefore, here's how we're going to handle rostering players for the fall of 2012: For a player to participate on a team in a fall tournament she must be on that team's roster and signed it. If she then plays on another team in the fall all she has to do is be added to the second team's roster and sign that one as well. She does not have to submit a player release form, nor does she use up her one-time release privilege. Theoretically, she can play for as many different teams in the fall as she wants as long as she's added to each team's roster, signs it and has it turned into the state office prior to participating.

Then once that player participates in a tournament next year, she'll be committed to the first team she plays on, and will be given a one-time release privilege at that point.

Sorry for the long-winded explanation, but hopefully this answers any questions that managers and players had regarding the USSSA softball "year".