Rules Governing Under-18 Players in Adult Competition

The BSF Executive has published minimum requirements that must be met in order for young people aged under 18 to play, coach or umpire in adult softball games, whether slowpitch or fastpitch, and a vote at the BSF AGM in February 2013 made these requirements mandatory.

Physical requirements are:
- All players under 18 must wear a helmet when batting and baserunning in slowpitch as well as in fastpitch softball.
- All players under 18 who are coaching, umpiring or acting as batboys or batgirls shall wear a helmet when on the field.
- Players under 18 must wear a gum shield if playing in the infield in either fastpitch or slowpitch.
- Players under 18 must wear a catcher’s mask if playing that position in slowpitch as well as in fastpitch softball.

Administrative requirements are:
- The young person’s parent or guardian shall complete a Permission to Play form in all cases where the young person will be competing with an adult team or taking part in an adult game. A form can be found at: [http://www.baseballsoftballuk.com/document/parent-guardian-permission-form](http://www.baseballsoftballuk.com/document/parent-guardian-permission-form). The completed form shall be submitted to BSUK and retained by the Team Captain. Once completed, the form can serve for the whole of the season in question.
- If a parent / guardian is unfamiliar with softball, a club or team representative should explain the risks of the sport to them.
- The Team Captain must ensure the young person is included on the team roster and is therefore covered by BSF Civil and Public Liability insurance, and by Personal Accident and Injury insurance if taken out by the team.

Safeguarding requirements are:
- Each team shall appoint a Safeguarding Officer who will ensure that there is a process in place to assess whether the young player is competent to play, umpire or coach at the level at which the team is competing. Each player who is under 18 shall be assessed for this purpose by the Team Coach or Captain.
- While no minimum age is given in this guidance, the younger the player, the more rigorous the assessment of competence needs to be.
- Four areas shall be considered when deciding if a young player is competent to take part in an adult team or game: (1) general physical capability; (2) social development; (3) emotional development; (4) softball skills and ability.
- The Team Coach or Captain shall review a young player’s competence to continue playing should game conditions change – for example, due to adverse weather, a change in the level of play or the conduct or aggressiveness of the opposing team.
- These requirements are minimum standards to be followed by all BSF-affiliated teams, whether competing in local leagues, in tournaments or internationally.
Alcohol and Drug Misuse at BSF or BSF-Sanctioned Tournaments

An occasional safety issue at tournaments is the danger to themselves and others posed by players feeling the effects of too much drink or in some cases recreational drugs.

While the judgement about whether a player is capable of playing safely may be a grey area, umpires have been instructed by BASU and the BSF to err on the side of caution. Captains will be warned about players who, in the umpire’s judgement, may pose a risk, and if the warning is not acted on, the umpire will eject any such player.