

**FLORIDA FALL SIGNATURE SHOWCASE
TOURNAMENT RULES AND GENERAL INFORMATION**
Last update: September 22, 2011 Changes are highlighted **PINK**

1. Check in Information: Each Team **MUST** check-in at the Tournament Desk at least 1 hour **BEFORE** their first game. At check-in, teams must submit a copy of their insurance, unless you have submitted this in advance. Teams will receive their player wristbands at check-in (see Item #24 for wristband information).

Tournament Desk hours are:

Friday: 2 hours before 1st scheduled game - 8pm, **Saturday: 8am - 6pm**, Sunday: 9am - 4pm.

2. No players, team coaches, or parents/spectators will be allowed in areas designated "College Coaches Only". This includes the Hospitality Tents and the Scouting Areas behind each field's backstop. Please do not take the chairs. Please do not sit in the chairs. Please remind parents that if there is no space for the college coaches, then the girls are the ones who will miss out.

3. No parking is allowed in areas that are designated as "Tournament Staff Parking Only" or "College Coach Parking Only". Only cars with the tournament decal on the dashboard or with the college coach VIPASS are allowed to park here. Parking is not allowed on the grass along the street. There will be signs posted to assist you.

4. USSSA Official Rules of Softball apply except where otherwise stated. Teams need to be sanctioned with USSSA to play in this tournament. Go to www.ussa.com to sanction.

5. Awards - bracket winners will receive the distinctive Signature Showcase Champion T-shirts. Bracket winners are determined by least runs allowed, **NOT** by wins/losses. If runs allowed is a tie, then runs scored, then head to head, then coin toss.

6. Tournament Format: The teams will be divided into brackets. All teams will play a minimum of 5 round robin exhibition games. Teams that can play on Friday will get a 6th game. Teams may play against an opponent from another bracket. The teams that finish in first place will be "crowned" Signature Showcase Champions. (See Item #16 for order of finish rule.)

7. Mercy Rule: The 8 runs after 5 innings "mercy" rule is **OPTIONAL**. We do not want teams to be humiliated, but if the coaches agree, the teams can continue to play until time runs out. Both coaches have to agree that the run rule will be waived. Remember that this is a showcase event and the girls can not be seen if they are not playing.

8. Playing Rules: Teams **MUST** turn in a lineup card to the umpires prior to start of game. Teams may use unlimited **DEFENSIVE** substitution during this tournament and you may bat 10 players. This is very simple. Put the 9 or 10 girls that you want to hit on your lineup card. Then put the girls in the field that you want to play defense. You can change the defensive players every inning if you want. If you change the batting order, you **MUST** let the umpire know. You do not need to tell the umpire about defensive changes, nor do you have to worry about re-entries, unless they are going back into the batting order. There is no catcher speed up rule, but you can utilize the courtesy runner rule for pitchers and catchers. For this tournament, the definition of courtesy runner is a player who is not currently in the batting order. If you do not have a bench player, use the last out.

9. Uniform shirts must be numbered. Pick up players may wear their original team's uniform. We highly recommend no duplicate numbers as it confuses the college coaches. No jewelry other than post type earrings in ears is allowed. Post type earrings in ears may be worn but must be taped. Umpires will be the judge in jewelry matters. If the umpire deems the earring unsafe, even if taped, then the player must remove them with no argument.

10. Protests: This is a non-protestable tournament. Rule disagreements will be settled at the time by the home plate umpire. Please don't argue. Remember the spirit of the tournament. College coaches don't want to spend their time watching arguments. Teams that refuse to play when umpire says "Play Ball" could be penalized, upon review of tournament director, with forfeit of all remaining games.

11. No glass containers, no pets, and no alcoholic beverages are allowed at the parks. No smoking is allowed on the fields or in the dugouts or in the bleachers. If you need to smoke please move away from spectators.

12. Please assist in keeping the dugouts clean for the next team by picking up your trash after the game and placing it in the receptacle provided in the dugout.

13. Game Time: All games will start on-time, not early. Official game will end at 7 innings or 1 hour 40 minutes. Game time slots are 2 hours.

· 13a. Game Clock: The game clock is a continuous running clock. All games start at their designated time, regardless of whether the teams are ready to play. The umpires will not need to keep an official time since the games start at their listed time and end 1 hour and 40 minutes later. For example, the 9am game clock starts at 9am and the game is over at 10:40am.

· 13b. Drop Dead Rule: Official game will end at 7 innings or at the 1 hour 40 minute time. If time expires before the 7th inning is completed, the game is over after that batter's at bat is finished (Drop Dead). The official score will revert to the last complete inning, unless the home team is up to bat and are ahead in the score or have tied the score.

· 13c. Extended Play: This is NOT OPTIONAL. Official game, and official scorekeeping, will end at 7 innings or at the 1 hour 40 minute time. If 7 innings have been played, and a winner is decided (see Item #15 regarding tiebreakers), and if there is still significant time available, teams will continue to play until time is up, even though official final score has already been determined. However, once time is up, game is over "drop dead", finish the batter. In other words, if significant time is still available, you will play 8,9,10 or more innings to show your players. The significance of the remaining time will be determined by the umpire at the time. "Significant time" means 10-15 minutes or more.

14. Forfeits: Forfeits are to be avoided at all costs.

· 14a. Forfeits are at the discretion of the Tournament Director or staff. If you are short a player (due to injury or other unforeseen circumstances) and need one to keep you from forfeiting, please contact the Tournament Desk or Tournament Director immediately. Temporary replacement players may be available, but we do need some notice. To avoid a forfeit, you are allowed to borrow a player from another team. Forfeits benefit neither team since the objective of the tournament is for the girls to be seen on the field by the college scouts!

· 14b. Teams that forfeit a game for any reason, risk not being accepted into the tournament again. If you are unable to play a game, you must advise the tournament officials, plus it is recommended that you attempt to find a replacement team for your game. You are ultimately responsible to make sure that your opponent is not shorted their opportunity to show their players.

· 14c. Teams that need extra players are able to pick up players for the tournament (see Item #32 and #33 on Pickup Players and Eligibility for more information).

15. International Tiebreaker:

During all tournament play, if the game is tied at the end of seven (7) innings AND there is still time remaining on the 1 hour and 40 minute clock, the International Tiebreaker will be used to break the tie. This entails placing the last batter from the previous inning on 2nd base to start the tiebreak inning with no outs. This will continue until a winner is determined or time expires. If the game is still tied at the end of the tiebreak innings when time expires, the tie will stand. If time expires during the tiebreak inning, finish the batter's at bat and then the game is over immediately (Drop Dead Rule) and the score reverts to the last complete inning unless the home team is at bat and ahead in the score. Obvious delaying tactics will not be allowed by umpires. Remember - the college coaches want to see girls playing, not coaches maneuvering.

16. Order of Finish: Bracket Champions will be determined based on defensive play (runs allowed), not on wins/losses. All games count, even games out of bracket. If there is a tie in runs allowed, the following criteria will be used to determine the bracket winner: runs scored, head to head play, and then coin toss. If scores are not reported, bracket winners will be determined by whatever means available to the tournament director.

17. Team listed first (top) gets first base dugout; however, teams with back to back games on the same field will not be required to change dugouts. Home team is determined by coin toss. Home team will be the official scorebook (no separate scorebook). All teams should report the scores to the Tournament Desk by the end of the day of competition. (See Item #31 for Score Reporting Information). We just need someone to report the score, please, otherwise it will be difficult to determine bracket winners.

18. Weather Contingencies: In case of uncontrollable circumstances or interruptions due to weather, the Tournament Director reserves the right to alter the tournament format in any way necessary to reach a conclusion. This can include, but may not be limited to, shortened game times, fewer games guaranteed, or playing rule changes. Games interrupted might not be resumed. Everything possible will be done to get the players on the field as soon as possible.

18a. FPAAlerts Text Messaging: All teams are required to have at least one responsible person on the team, either coach or parent or player, to sign up for the FREE text messaging update with FPAAlerts. This person will be notified via cell phone text message when delays or cancellations or schedule changes have occurred. This is a FREE service to the teams. Everyone on the team can sign up for this, but at least one responsible person **MUST** be designated so your team is not left out of the automated communications. Go to www.signatureshowcases.com and find the link to FPAAlerts.

18b. Your Responsibility: It is ultimately the responsibility of the team managers and coaches to verify their schedule daily to make sure that no changes have been made. We do what ever we can to make it easy for you to be notified of changes, but you must do your part. Please be diligent on a daily basis, especially if there have been circumstances that could cause schedule changes, and please sign up for FPAAlerts.

19. It is the responsibility of the team managers and coaches to know their field assignments, times, etc, for all games. The Official Tournament Game Schedule will be maintained at the Tournament Desk. Please verify your game schedule occasionally at the Tournament Desk. Teams that no-show a game risk being replaced in their other games, and also may not be invited to future tournaments.

20. Injuries: We do not have trainers on premises during this tournament. Emergency First Aid supplies will be available at the Tournament Desk. Ice is available at the concession stands. However, it is recommended that each team bring their own first aid supplies. If a player on your team experiences an injury that requires medical attention, you must contact the Tournament Desk immediately. An injury report must be filled out in order to have a record of the occurrence. If the injury is an emergency, call 911 and emergency services will be sent. Players who are or were unconscious or who are experiencing neck/head injuries should **NOT BE MOVED** off the field.

21. Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Managers/coaches are responsible for their own conduct and for that of their players, assistants and spectators. Abusive language and/or unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated in any degree. Noisemakers, whether homemade or store bought, are not allowed. Coaches, players, and spectators may be ejected from the game if in violation of this rule. The initial "cooling off period" is the rest of the game. Any manager, coach, player or spectator who is ejected from a game may/will have their behavior reviewed by the Umpire in Chief or the Tournament Director, and the "cooling off period" may be extended from one game to the rest of the day and even to the rest of the tournament, depending on severity of conduct. Any manager, coach, or spectator who is ejected must leave the park for the duration of the cooling off period. A player who is ejected will be restricted to the dugout for any games during the cooling off period and will not be allowed to play in any games in any manner for the rest of the cooling off period. This is a severe penalty so be on notice that misbehavior on the part of players, coaches or spectators will not be tolerated. Managers/coaches may be held responsible for players and spectators behavior also. If any one who has been ejected fails to follow umpire instructions or fails to abide by the cooling off period, the team will be ejected from the tournament. Signature Showcases has a "zero tolerance" policy.

22. Warmup Area:

· Pre Game Warmup is to be conducted only in the Open Play Areas or in the grass outfield areas on fields with temporary fencing. Any team may use any of these allowed areas, but teams are requested to share outfield area and to try to stay on their dugout side of the field.

· Additional Information: There is to be no throwing of balls or batting in or near the sidewalk areas. There is to be no hitting of balls or throwing of balls into permanent or temporary fencing. Girls must wear batting helmets any time bats are being swung (even during soft toss and whiffles), and any player warming up a pitcher must wear a catcher's mask.

23. Situation Play: **This is NOT OPTIONAL.** During the games, situation play will be used in designated innings.

- 1st and 2nd innings - normal play.
- 3rd inning – a runner starts the inning on 1st base.
- 4th inning – a runner starts the inning on 2nd base.

- 5th inning – runners start the inning on 1st and 3rd.
- 6th and 7th inning or later - normal play.

24. Wristbands: All players must wear the appropriate colored wristband during the entire duration of the tournament. Players without wristbands will not be allowed to play. A limited number of extra wristbands will be available at the tournament desk if a band is lost or broken, but it is recommended that the players be extremely responsible with their wristbands. It is recommended that the wristband be attached loosely to prevent the need for removing it. The wristbands designate to the college coaches the year of graduation of the player and their recruiting eligibility.

25. Double Wide First Base: Double wide first bases are in use on all field. The batter-baserunners are to use the foul side base, while the defensive player must use the fair side base. However, if the throw is coming from foul territory, then the batter-baserunner uses the fair side base, and the defensive player uses the foul side base.

26. Player Profiles – using the FPDatabase service, each team should designate one person on their staff to submit the team player profile information for all players. You will receive additional information regarding this requirement with the deadlines for compliance.

27. Cancellation/Refund Policy: If a team cancels after being accepted in the tournament and we are unable to fill their spot, they will be subject to a 100% cancellation fee. If we are able to fill their spot, they will be charged a \$150 cancellation fee. However, within 45 days of the tournament, teams that cancel will be charged a \$400 cancellation fee. After the game schedule has been completed, teams that cancel will be charged a 100% cancellation fee. There will be no refund of entry fees or practice game fees due to uncontrollable circumstances, such as weather. If you paid using the online pay option, you will also be subject to a minimum \$30 processing fee.

28. The tournament does not provide water in the dugouts. Teams are allowed to bring coolers into the park. There is a water fountain near the dugout.

29. Hotel Policy: All teams are required to book their hotel reservations through our designated hotel coordinator. **TEAMS ARE NOT TO CALL THE HOTELS DIRECTLY UNLESS ADVISED BY THE HOTEL COORDINATOR.** Teams are only allowed to stay at tournament sanctioned hotels; these are hotels that give the tournament reduced rate rooms for the college coaches. You are required to support these hotels because they are helping your girls get scholarships by helping us make it more economical for the college coaches to attend the tournament, which encourages more coaches to come. Thank you for your cooperation.

30. Official Ball: We will be using the Yellow Optic .47 cor ball during the tournament.

31. Score Reporting: Teams must report scores to the Tournament Desk or you can Twitter the scores to FPHQ or text them to the Tournament Director. **Both teams** should report the score. There is a “DIY Scoreboard” at the Tournament Desk where you can “do it yourself” and write your scores. Please help us collect scores so we can determine bracket winners, and post the scores on the website.

32. Pick-up Players: Teams are highly encouraged to bring more than 9 players to the tournament. A roster of 11 is recommended in case of injuries or illness, especially since forfeits are not allowed. Teams are allowed to pickup players for this event.

33. The tournament committee reserves the right to qualify any team or any player to preserve the integrity of the tournament. Teams and players will be reviewed to determine, and ensure, eligibility. Teams or players may be subject to disqualification at any time. Players who have been banned from Signature Showcases due to dangerous or severe unsportsmanlike behavior or illegal activity will not be allowed. This is an invitational tournament.

34. Parking Fees: There are no parking fees at the Florida Fall Signature Showcase in Naples.

35. Pitching distance for all showcase games is 43 feet at all Signature Showcases.

36. Metal cleats are allowed at all Signature Showcases.