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PROGRAMS

PLAYERS

COACHES

UMPIRES

OFFICIALS

TOURNAMENTS &
WORLD SERIES

MEDIA

STORE

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Now At Bat - New Bats

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Now Batting - **New Bats!**

The current bat performance standard – 1.15 BPF – has been in place for roughly 25 years. But times are changing in youth baseball, and just as the college and high school markets adopted a woodlike performance standard (known as BBCOR) a few years ago, USA Baseball and the six main youth baseball governing bodies – Little League, Pony, **Babe Ruth Baseball/Cal Ripken Baseball**, Dixie Youth Baseball, American Amateur Baseball Congress and the AAU - have approved their own wood-like standard on youth bats. Commonly referred to as the new USA Baseball Standard, or USABat, the new standard becomes *baseball law* on January 1, 2018. These bats are now being sold to the general public.

“Beginning with the launch in 2018, we will take another step forward in making our game more uniform at the youth level and ensuring the long-term integrity of the game,” explains USA Baseball Executive Director/CEO Paul Seiler. Seiler adds that the new standard will not have a drop-weight limit, so young players can use bats made with lightweight materials.

The adoption of this new youth bat performance standard by USA Baseball means that the majority of baseball playing children under the age of 12 will be using a new bat in 2018 that may not have as much “pop” as their current bats because it’s a woodlike performance standard. It will be a learning curve. “Any time you introduce something new in sports, it can take a while in order for people to embrace the new standard,” admits Russell Hartford, Director of USABat for USA Baseball. But he is confident players will adapt. “These new bats will be durable and long lasting.” In some respects, the new performance bat represents uncharted waters for every entity that caters to the youth baseball market. It will be up to the industry to pave the way.”

“Our bat team has worked tirelessly on developing the highest performing bat for this new standard,” says Mike Thompson, Executive Vice President of Marketing for Rawlings Sporting Goods. “We did it once before when BBCOR came into play and, we have done it again for USA Baseball.” Thompson says the company is working with its partners and customers to educate dealers, as well as the end consumer, about how this will affect the bats young players will be using for the 2018 season.

Jay Helmick, Senior Vice President at Axe Bat believes there will be a silver lining in the situation for manufacturers and dealers. “We see it as an opportunity to introduce players to the benefits of our Axe handle,” he adds.

The Cal Ripken Division of Babe Ruth League, Inc. has approved the use of the 2 ⁵/₈-inch barrel bats for local league play and tournament play beginning in January 2018 and coinciding with the new USA Bat standard. Similar to the NCAA and NFHS BBCOR standard, which helped to eliminate discrepancies with different length bats and thus provide a more direct measure of bat performance, the new USA Baseball bat standard will allow youth baseball organizations in the United States to reach their goal of establishing a wood-like standard, a standard that will provide for the long-term integrity of the game.

To view an approved bat list, please visit <https://usabat.com>.

Babe Ruth League Bat Rules	
2017	2018
T-Ball	
Marked for T-Ball Use	USA Baseball T-Ball Stamp
Cal-Ripken Baseball	
2 1/4" Barrel with 1.15 BPF Marking	USA Baseball Marking 2 5/8" Barrel Maximum NO BBCOR BATS
Babe Ruth Baseball 13-15	
2 5/8" Barrel Aluminum or Composite BBCOR .50	USA Baseball Marking or BBCOR .50 2 5/8" Barrel
Babe Ruth Baseball 16-18	
All Bats Must Be BBCOR .50 No Greater Than -3	All Bats Must Be BBCOR .50 No Greater Than -3



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