



# 2021 State Softball Championships

## Tularosa Wins First Softball Title in School History

The Tularosa Wildcats (17-2) defeated the Loving Falcons (15-7) in the 2021 NMAA A/2A State Softball Championship game, 8-4 to capture the school's first softball state championship.

Loving jumped out to an early 4-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning. The Falcons loaded the bases and a single by Athena Neeld scored three. Loving added another to make it 4-0 after one. Tularosa cut the lead in half off a two-run homerun by Layla Gaston. Loving went 1-2-3 in the bottom of the inning but still held the lead at 4-2 after two innings of play.



Neither team could score over the next three innings as both teams played solid defense.

The Wildcats then added five in the top of the sixth, highlighted by grand slam from Gaston, her second homerun of the game. Tularosa added one more in the top of the seventh to take a commanding 8-4 lead. Loving went down 1-2-3 in the bottom of the seventh, as Tularosa captured their first softball title in school history.

## Dexter Wins 3A State Softball Championship

The Dexter Demons (19-2) capped off an impressive season with a 9-1 victory over the West Las Vegas Lady Dons in the 2021 NMAA 3A State Softball Championships. This was the fifth state championship for the Demons and the first since 2018.

The Demons took an early 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first. Kelsey Storie led off with a triple and scored on a single by Zoey Neeld-Stewart. Neeld-Stewart then crossed home plate off a double by teammate Aryana Munoz to make it 2-0.

The Lady Dons cut the lead to 2-1 in the top of the fourth, as Mickey Montoya tripled to left center and scored off a single by Angel Branchal.

Dexter however added four more in the bottom of the fifth and three runs in the sixth, capturing the 2021 State 3A title by a score of 9-1.



## Artesia Hoist 2021 4A State Softball Blue Trophy

The Artesia Bulldogs (21-2) won the 2021 4A State Softball Championship, 4-0, over the Gallup Bengals (20-3). The Bulldogs earned their third straight blue trophy and the seventh overall in program history.

The 4A title game came down to just one inning and the pitching circle. Gallup's Seniah Haines allowed just one hit and no runs thru fourth innings of play before giving up four runs on five hits in the fifth. Artesia's pitcher, Rylee Crandall was brilliant in her outing, allowing no runs, one hit and striking out 11 batters on the day.



Both pitchers held the other team's batter at bay over the first four innings of play as the score remained 0-0. Then in the bottom of the fifth Artesia scored four runs highlighted by doubles from Presely Skinner and Perseis Aguilar.

Gallup had one last stitched effort in the top of the seventh, but it wasn't enough as Artesia captured the 4A State title.



## Cleveland Captures First State Softball Championship

The Cleveland Storm (21-2) hoisted the blue trophy for the first time in school history with a 3-0 victory over the Carlsbad Cavegirls in the 2021 NMAA 5A State Softball Championships. This was the second time the Storm had been in the title game, losing to Onate (now Organ Mountain) back in 2016.

Defense was the key for the Storm in the 5A State Championship Softball game. Pitcher Aalijah Alacron threw a complete game allowing no runs on six hits and striking out two batters.



The Storm grabbed an early 1-0 in the bottom of the second as a single by Tavia Fragua scored AJ Naranjo from third. In the bottom of the third, Cleveland added one more run to make it 2-0. Ashley Archuleta led off with a triple to left center and scored two batters on a fielder's choice.

Alacron continued to shut down the Carlsbad hitters thru four innings, as the Storm added to their lead in the bottom of the inning, scoring one run to make it 3-0. Avi Fierro reached on a fielder's choice with one out. She then made it to second on a sac bunt and scored off a single by Archuleta to make it 3-0.

Three runs would be all Cleveland needed to capture their first softball state title in school history as Alacron and the Storm's defense shut down the Cavegirls at the plate.