2017 NFHS SOFTBALL RULES
POWERPOINT
NFHS (located in Indianapolis, IN – Est. 1920):

- National leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities;
- National authority on interscholastic activity programs;
- Conducts national meetings;
- Sanctions interstate events;
- Produces national publication for high school administrators;
- National source for interscholastic coach training and national information center.
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

- Membership = 50 member state associations and D.C.
- NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.8 million in high school sports.

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The NFHS Rules Review Committee is chaired by the chief operating officer and composed of all rules editors. After each committee concludes its deliberations and has adopted its recommended changes for the subsequent year, such revisions will be evaluated by the Rules Review Committee.
The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level.

- Publishes 4 million pieces of materials annually.

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GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS AND STATE ASSOCIATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION OF ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Request from Student to School for Accommodation(s)
2. School Conducts Individual Student Assessment
3. Request from School for Accommodation(s) to State Association
4. Notice and Opportunity to be Heard
5. State Association Review of Request
6. State Association Provides Written Determination for Accommodation(s) to School
7. If appropriate, School Provides Letter of Authorization to Head Official for Local Contest Allowing Competition with Accommodation(s)
2017 NFHS SOFTBALL
RULES CHANGES
c. Taper. The taper is the transition area which connects the narrower handle to the wider barrel portion of the bat. The taper shall have a **solid surface** and shall have a **conical shape**. Its length and material may vary.
The rule has been changed and no longer requires the taper to have a solid surface.
UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT
RULE 3-2-1

ART. 1 . . . Uniforms of all team members shall be of the same color and style. State associations may, on an individual basis, permit a player to participate while wearing a different style uniform for religious reasons, inclement weather, etc.
UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT RULE 3-2-1

- Associations can make exceptions relative to inclement weather, religion and other circumstances.
Exposed undergarments, if worn, are considered part of the official uniform. All exposed undergarments shall be a solid single color: black, white, gray or a school color.

a. For individual players, exposed upper-body undergarments do not have to be the same color as exposed lower-body undergarments.

b. For all team members, exposed upper-body undergarments shall be the same solid single color, and all exposed lower-body undergarments shall be the same solid single color.
c. Garments other than team uniforms such as arm sleeves, leg sleeves, and tights are permissible. Anything worn on the arm or leg is a sleeve, except a brace, and shall meet the color restrictions.
UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT
RULE 3-2-7

- Undergarments shall be the same solid single color: black, white, gray or a solid school color.
ART 15 . . . All equipment shall be inspected by the umpire, and is to be placed outside the dugout/bench prior to the start of the game.
Teams are required to have equipment lined up against dugout/bench area for umpires to check prior to the start of the game.
BENCH AND FIELD CONDUCT
RULE 3-6-7 PENALTY

ART. 7 . . . Players and substitutes shall not enter the contest unreported.

PENALTY: Players and substitutes shall not enter the contest unreported. The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. The head coach is also restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game for a second violation.
Language has been added to the substitution rule to make it clear when a coach is also restricted to the dugout/bench area for a second unreported substitution violation.
NFHS SOFTBALL
MAJOR EDITORIAL CHANGES
ART. 2 . . . The pitcher shall not at any time during the game be allowed to use tape or any other substance on the ball or contact points of the pitching hand or fingers; nor shall any other player apply a foreign substance to the ball. A pitcher who licks her fingers shall wipe them off before bringing them in contact with the ball. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin or any comparable drying agent may be used to dry the hand. It is not necessary to wipe off the drying agent before making contact with the ball. The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm or thighs which the umpire judges to be distracting to the batter.
A pitcher does not have to wipe off the drying agent before making contact with the ball.
ART. 8 . . . The batter hits the ball fair or foul while either foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or while touching the plate.

- The note instructing the umpire to ignore the batter’s follow through was removed. This note did not clarify the rule, and often created confusion in the administration of the rule.
c.(F.P.) a pitched ball (not entirely in the batter’s box) not swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter’s person or clothing. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter’s hands are not to be considered part of the bat.
THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER RULE 8-1-2 PENALTY

- Language regarding a hit batter that was originally inserted in the rules book in 2013 was inadvertently omitted.
BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT
RULE 8-2-4 EXCEPTION

The batter-runner shall be called out when:

ART. 4 . . . The batter-runner fails to advance to first base and enters the dugout/bench area after a batted fair ball, a base on balls, a hit batter (F.P.), a dropped third strike (F.P.), or catcher obstruction.

EXCEPTION: The ball is dead on a base on balls (S.P.), or on a hit batter **who is injured** (F.P.), the ball is dead, the batter-runner is not out and runners cannot advance unless forced.
If a hit batter leaves the game because of an injury, she is not out if she doesn’t go to first base.
There has been a noticeable increase in the use of wristbands to communicate pitching signals in the last few years.

Many coaches are verbally or visually communicating a series of numbers which the players lookup on a wristband.

Typically the pitcher is behind and not in contact with the pitcher’s plate when this occurs. This practice is legal as long as the pitcher still complies with Rule 6-1-1.
PITCHING POSITION RULE 6-1-1

a. Prior to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with shoulders in line with first and third base with the ball in the glove or pitching hand, and with the hands separated.

b. While in this position, the pitcher shall take (or simulate taking) a signal from the catcher. Even if they took the actual signal behind and not in contact with the pitcher’s plate they must comply to this section of the rule by simulating taking the signal from the catcher once they are on the pitcher’s plate with their hands still separated.
c. After completing "b" in the previous slide, the pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving.
PITCHING POSITION

- NFHS Softball’s pitching rule supports a wide range of pitching styles by allowing a pitcher to start with both feet on the pitcher’s plate, one foot on and one foot behind or to step backward as a part of their pitching motion.

- Rule 6-1-1 states that the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot on or partially on the top surface of the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
PITCHING POSITION

- Rule 6-1-2b states that once the hands are brought together and are in motion, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery.

- Any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. The step backward may end before or after the hands come together.
PITCHING POSITION SUMMARY

1. Must step on the pitcher’s plate with hands separated. Pivot foot must be on or partially on top of the pitcher’s plate, non-pivot foot must be in contact with or behind the pitcher’s plate, both feet must start and remain within or partially within the 24” length of the pitcher’s plate.

2. Must take or simulate taking a signal from the catcher with the hands separated.
3. Must start to step backward prior to the hands coming together.
   • Hands can be moving toward each other but may not be together prior to starting the backward step.
   • The backward step may end before or after the hands come together.

4. Following the step backward all other aspect of Rule 6-1 and 6-2 must be followed to remain a legal pitch.
Points of Emphasis

REFLECTIVE MATERIALS, ADORNMENTS

- A uniform shall not have any reflective adornments.
- Reflective materials on ribbons, bows, and headbands, including glitter and rhinestones, are considered illegal and should not be permitted.
Teams are reminded that a headband that is designed to be tied in the back, is not considered a bandanna, and is legal if it meets the color and manufacturer’s logo restrictions.
DP/FLEX REMINDERS

- The DP can never play defense only.
- The FLEX can never be on offense only.
- The FLEX and DP can NEVER play offense at the same time. The FLEX and DP positions are linked by the DP/FLEX rule. If the FLEX is going to play offense they have to do it in the original DP’s position, therefore only one of them can play offense at a time.
DP/FLEX REMINDERS

- The FLEX and DP can play defense at the same time. The DP can play defense for any player other than the FLEX and no one has left the game.

- The starting DP and FLEX players have one re-entry just as all players do.

- Once the game is started with the DP/FLEX positions in the lineup those positions are available for the entire game. Even if the starting DP or starting FLEX has left the game a second time, the positions are still available and an eligible substitute can enter the game as the FLEX or DP. So even though the starting player(s) left the game twice and cannot re-enter, their positions is still active as long as the team has eligible substitutes.
## DP/FLEX REMINDERS

### REMINDERS:
1. The DP can never be on DEFENSE ONLY.
2. The FLEX player can never be on OFFENSE ONLY.
3. The DP and FLEX player can never be on offense at the same time.
4. The STARTER and the SUBSTITUTE cannot be in the game at the same time.
5. The starting DP and FLEX player have one re-entry just as any other player.
6. Once the game is started with the DP/FLEX positions in the lineup, those positions are available for the entire game.
7. The penalty for illegal re-entry of the DP or FLEX player is always restriction to the bench/dugout.
8. If the player is on offense, she is called out. If the player is on defense, the team on offense may have the choice of taking the result of the play or accepting the penalty.

### Table

| 1. | A DP does not have to be used. |
| 2. | If used it must be noted on the starting lineup. |
| 3. | A team using the DP starts the game with 10 players on the lineup card, but could end the game with 9 or 10. |
| 4. | The Starting DP can play defense for any of the other 9 players in the lineup. |
| 5. | If the starting DP plays defense for a player listed within the first 9 batting positions in the lineup, that player will continue to bat in her original position in the lineup and has not left the game. |
| 6. | The player listed in the 10th position in the lineup will play defense only and will be called a FLEX player. The DP and the FLEX player can play defense simultaneously. |
| 7. | If the starting DP plays defense for the FLEX player, the FLEX player has left the game and the team continues with 9 players. |
| 8. | The FLEX player can bat or run, but only in the original DP's position. Therefore, the FLEX player and the DP can never be on offense simultaneously. |
| 9. | When the FLEX player bats for the DP, the FLEX player bats in position of the original DP. The DP is considered to have left the game, but the FLEX player has not. |
| 10. | If the DP re-enters the game, she must do so in her original batting order position and the FLEX player could: (A) move back to the No. 10 position in the lineup, or (B) leave the game. If the FLEX player moves back to the 10th position in the lineup, the team resumes the game with 10 players and the FLEX player has never left the game. |
| 11. | A substitute can enter the game for either the DP or the FLEX position. The substitute can enter on defense, or as a pinch hitter or pinch runner. |
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https://nfhs-softball.arbitersports.com/front/105414/Site

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