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**7.18 SOFTBALL**

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**7.18.1 General Rules/Policies**

- A. Classes** - There are four classes: A-2A, 3A, 4A, and 5A.
- B. Practice Date** - Practice may begin Monday of Week #32.
- C. Game Limitation** - Each varsity team or individual is limited to twenty-six (26) total games. Each sub-varsity team or individual is limited to twenty-three (23) total games. This includes regular season games and invitational tournament games.
  - 1. Innings of Play** - If a school plays two games at different levels (i.e. JV & Varsity) back to back on the same day, at the same site, and against the same school, a student-athlete may participate in 10 innings between the two contests and only count this as one game towards their game limitations.

**Note:** If a player participates in a contest as a courtesy runner only, this will not count towards that player's game limitations for the season.
- D. Protests** - By state association adoption, protests will NOT be allowed.
- E. NMAA District Clinic** - The head coach from each declared softball school must complete the NMAA district clinic in person or online at [www.nmact.org](http://www.nmact.org) between February 1<sup>st</sup> and February 15<sup>th</sup>. Failure to comply shall result in a \$100 fine to the school which will be assessed on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- F. State Association Adoptions** - The following options in the National Federation Softball Rulebook have been adopted by a vote of the schools:
  - 1. NFHS Rule 4-2-2 Regulation Games** - If a game ends because of weather conditions, or darkness interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire, it is a regulation game provided:
    - a.** Five full innings have been played; or if the home team has scored an equal or greater number of runs in four or four and a fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns; or,
    - b.** Play has gone beyond five full innings and is called when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bat. The score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; unless the home team, in its half of the completed inning, scores a run (or runs) which equal or exceeds the opponent's score, in which case the final score shall be recorded when the game is called.
  - 2. International Tie Breaker** - In the case of a tied game, the International Tie Breaker will be utilized as follows: At the start of each half-inning beginning in the top of the 8<sup>th</sup>, the offensive team will begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat ninth in that half inning being placed on second base. If the Pitcher or Catcher is that ninth batter, then a courtesy runner may be used. A substitute may also be legally inserted for the runner.
  - 3. 10-Run and 15-Run Rules** - A game shall be terminated after three innings if one team is ahead by 15 runs and after 5 innings if one team is ahead by 10 runs for both varsity and junior varsity contests.

4. **Suspended Game** - If a game is terminated for any reason (weather, darkness, mechanical failures, etc.) and does not meet the requirements of a regulation game it will be treated as a suspended game. The game will be continued from the exact point of suspension with the line-up and batting order of each team the same as it was the moment of suspension.
  - a. **Suspended District Games** - All suspended district games must be completed as indicated above. The game should be completed at its original site, on a date agreed upon by both schools, if feasible.
  - b. **Suspended Non-District Games** - Suspended non-district games can be completed if both schools agreed to do so. The same protocol should be followed as listed above for district games.
  - c. **Continuation of Suspended Game** - In state tournament play, any suspended game shall be continued from the point of suspension at a later time. All state games must be played out to seven innings or more (unless the state adopted 10 or 15-run rule ends the game earlier).
5. **Unable to Continue Suspended Game** - If circumstances do not allow for a suspended game to be completed no win, loss, or tie will be given to either team.
6. **Undetermined Winner** - A regulation game where a winner cannot be determined will be treated as a tie for both team's record.
7. **Time Limits** - There is no statewide time limit rule for any level.
  - a. **District Time Limits** - A time limit can be implemented by a district if they choose to do so. Games that end due to a time limit will be considered regulation games regardless of how many innings are played. The score will remain as recorded when the game was called.
  - b. **Invitational Tournament Time Limits** - Time limits can be implemented for invitational tournaments put on by schools/school districts. Games that end due to a time limit will be considered regulation games regardless of how many innings are played. The score will remain as recorded when the game was called.

**Note:** NFHS Rule 4.2.3, Note #1 – If a state association has adopted game-ending procedures, only those game-ending procedures may be used should the opposing coaches wish to terminate a game.

#### **7.18.2 Umpires**

- A. Umpires working any NMAA sanctioned event must be registered through the Association. Schools are required to use two (2) NMAA/NMOA officials for NMAA regular season sanctioned contests.
- B. The use of a non-registered official subjects the violating school to a fine.

#### **7.18.3 District Tie-breaking procedures to Determine Placement** (to be used by ALL districts within the sport of softball)

- A. A school must play each member of the district to be eligible for the championship.
- B. District placement is determined by district play record
- C. District Tiebreakers – Two Teams

1. In case of a tie in district record, the team with the better head to head record in district play will have earned higher placement.
2. If the two tied teams have the same head to head record in district play, a run differential from the district games between the tied teams will be used to determine placement. 10 runs will be the maximum allowed for any one game. Each team involved uses either a plus or minus run differential; if a team wins by 7, they are credited +7; the other team has a deficit of -7 in the calculation.
3. If the two teams are still tied, a run differential from ALL district games will be used to determine placement. 10 runs will be the maximum allowed for any one game.
4. If the two teams are still tied, a coin toss will determine placement.
5. This process, including the coin toss, is administered by the NMAA staff. The official declaration of results is the responsibility of the Association staff.

**D. District Tiebreakers – More Than Two Teams**

1. In case of a tie in district record, the team with the better head to head record in district play between the tied teams will have earned higher placement.
2. If the tied teams have the same head to head record in district play, a run differential will be used based on all of the head to head district games between the tied teams. 10 runs will be the maximum allowed for any one game.
3. If all teams are still tied, a run differential from ALL district games will be used to determine placement. 10 runs will be the maximum allowed for any one game.
4. If the teams are still tied, a coin toss will determine placement.
5. This process, including the coin toss, is administered by the NMAA staff. The official declaration of results is the responsibility of the Association staff

**\*\*\*NOTE:** *If any step in this process leads to the placement of a team or teams, but still leaves two teams in a tie, the tiebreaker system from Section C will be used as it will revert back to the two team tiebreaker procedure.*

**Example A:**

Team A and Team B are tied at the end of the season with a 2-2 record. Team A defeated Team B by a score of 5-2 and 3-1; therefore, Team A has earned the higher placement.

**Example B:**

Team A and Team B are tied at the end of the season with a 2-2 record. Team A defeated Team B by a score of 4-1 and Team B defeated Team A by a score of 3-2. Team A would have +3 and -1 run differential, totaling +2, while Team B would have -3 and +1 run differential, totaling -2. Therefore, Team A has earned the higher placement.

**Example C:**

Teams A, B and C are all tied with a 2-2 record. The results of the district games are as follows:

Team A (4) vs. Team B (2)

Team A (2) vs. Team C (3)

Team B (5) vs. Team C (1)

Results: Team A +1, Team B +2, Team C -3

Therefore, Team B has earned the highest placement, with Team A receiving the second highest placement and Team C finishing last.

**Example D:**

Teams A, B and C are all tied with a 2-2 record. The results of the district games are as follows:

Team A (4) vs. Team B (2)

Team A (2) vs. Team C (3)

Team B (4) vs. Team C (1)

Results: Team A +1, Team B +1, Team C -2

Therefore, Team C is placed in 3<sup>rd</sup> place with the worst run differential. Teams A and B are still tied, however, and thus the two team tie breaker system will now be used. In head to head competition between Team A and B, Team A was 1-0 and has earned higher placement and 1<sup>st</sup> Place. Team B is placed in 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**7.18.4 State Tournament Information**

**A. Dates**

Week #45 Seeding and First Round for Classes 3A-5A

***Note: 3A First Round must be held on Wednesday of Week #45***

Week #46 Quarterfinals, Semifinals, Finals for Classes 3A-5A

Week #46 Seeding and First Round thru Finals for Class A/2A

**B. Qualifying Information**

1. In all classes, the District Champion advances to the NMAA State Tournament. The remainder of the field of 16 teams will be filled with at-large selections.

**C. Tournament Format**

1. All Classes will play in a 16 team bracket under the following format:
  - a. The first round of 16 will be single elimination.
  - b. The remaining 8 teams will play a double elimination tournament

**Note:** See section 7.11.2 for Seeding and Selection Process

- D. Roster Limitation** - Teams are limited to eighteen (18) uniformed squad members on their roster.