

## **2025 NFHS SOFTBALL RULES CHANGES**

**1-8-6 EXCEPTION & PENALTY:** High school softball coaches will be able to use electronic devices in the dugout for one-way communication to the catcher while the team is on defense. The penalty from Rule 3-6-11 was added to Rule 1-8-6 as well, with violators subject to ejection unless the offense is ruled to be of a minor nature.

**Rationale:** The committee has made these changes to support the use of emerging technology within the sport of softball. Being a permissive rule, the use of this one-way electronic communication will allow those who choose to embrace the technology an additional option to communicate with the catcher while on defense.

**3-6-11:** The rule change specifies that coaches are prohibited from using the device to communicate with any other team member while on defense or any team member while on offense and the coach cannot use the device outside the dugout/bench area.

**Rationale:** Clarifies that a coach may use an electronic device for one-way communication to the catcher while the team is on defense.

**9-3-2b:** When a baserunner is declared out for being hit by a fair batted ball the batter-runner is credited with a fielder's choice in the scorebook.

**Rationale:** This change corrects an error in the rules book that awarded a base hit in this instance.

## **NFHS RULE CHANGES FOR 2024 as pertaining to PRIMETIME SOFTBALL**

**1-8-6:** Permits electronic information to be transmitted to the dugout from anywhere outside of live ball area.

**3-2-5:** Removes the color restriction for headbands and ribbons.

**3-2-7:** Defines where a wristband with a playbook/playcard may be worn. If worn by the pitcher, the wristband with a playbook/playcard must be worn on the non-pitching wrist or arm.

**4-2-7, 10-2-3e, h:** The umpire may call (end) a game if playing conditions in or around the facility become unacceptable to safely continue the game.

**6-1-2c, 2-47:** The pitcher may now have both feet off the ground at the same time as long as both feet remain within the 24-inch width of the pitching plate and the pitcher does not replant the pivot foot. A definition for a replant was added.

**6-2-2:** Pitchers can only use dirt, powdered rosin or comparable drying agents that are listed on the USA Softball's certified equipment webpage to dry the hand.

## **PRIMETIME SOFTBALL DIVISIONS OF PLAY**

### **ART 1. Team Classification Divisions of Play**

Sec 1. Teams may register under one of the following classifications of divisions of play:  
ART 1. Age Divisions of play shall range from 6U to 18U; 6U, 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U, 16/18U, 18U

Sub A. Teams may register as "B" or "C". "C" class teams may play in Open class tournaments/divisions but "B" class teams may not play in "C" class tournaments/divisions. Additionally players rostered on a PRIMETIME Softball "B" class team may not pitch or catch in a "C" class tournament within their respective age division. *Example: A 12U "Open" class pitcher may not pitch or catch in a 12U "C" class game but may play any other position. However, she may pitch or catch in a 14U "C" class game.*

Sub B. The age divisions 16/18 and 18U will be "B" class only.

### **ART 2. Age Division Cutoff**

Sec 1. A player's age on September 1st of the seasonal year determines the age classification in which the player is eligible to participate. Seasonal years will run from 8/1 until 7/31 of the following year. *Example: if a girl turns 9 after 8/31, she can play 8U until the seasonal year ends.*

### **ART 3. Regulation Game**

Sec 1. A Regulation Game shall consist of five innings unless extra innings are necessary due to a tied score. A regulation game may be shortened due to run rules, the home team does not require its half of the seventh inning, weather, daylight, or a predetermined time limit.

Sub a. Tournament Directors may establish time limits on their contests. A game shall consist of either **five** innings or the allotted time specified, whichever occurs first.

Sub b. A new inning may not begin after a time limit has expired. Innings started prior to time limit expiring shall be completed **unless playing drop dead time limits.**

Sub c. The time limit of a game shall begin at the conclusion of the pregame conference.

Sec 2. A game ends when the team with less runs completes their final at bat in a regulation game **except in drop dead time limit games.**

Sec 3. If a game is suspended and resumed at a later point it shall continue from the point in the game it was suspended. The batting order, lineup, and all other components of each team reflected exactly how they were at the point of suspension.

Sec 4. Game ends due to weather will not be resumed after 40 minutes of game time has been played.

Sec 5. Run Rules allocate a win to the team that:

Sub a. Has a 12 run lead after 3 innings are complete (2 ½ if the home team leads)

Sub b. Has a 10 run lead after 4 innings are complete (3 ½ if the home team leads)

Sub c. Has a 8 run lead after 5 innings are complete 4.5 if the home team leads.)

Sec 6. International Tie Breaker If after completing **five** innings or at the conclusion of a time limit and the score is tied the following tiebreaker procedure shall be implemented. The player with the last completed at bat shall be placed at second base. A legal substitute may be inserted for the player placed at second base and a courtesy runner may be utilized for the pitcher or catcher.

Sub b. If a team is playing short-handed and the vacant position is set to be the player placed at second base the team will not be required to take an out for the vacant position and the player who precedes the absent player shall be placed at second.

Sub c. If an incorrect base runner is placed at second base to start the tiebreaker procedure the correct runner should be inserted immediately even if a pitch has been thrown. There shall be no penalty as this is a correctable error, and all plays made with the incorrect runner shall stand.

Sub d. Game officials shall obtain the information of the correct base runner to start each half inning on second base from the scorekeepers and notify each team

## **ART 4. Forfeited Game**

Sec 1. A game shall be forfeited by game officials or the Site Director in the following instances:

Sub a. A team is 10 minutes late in arriving or beginning play after the game officials declare the start of the game.

Sub b. A team refuses to start a game or continue a game after the game has begun.

Sub c. A team delays more than one minute in resuming play after game officials announce play to resume or refuses to obey game official's instructions to remove a player or coach.

Sub d. A team employs the use of tactics intentionally designed to lengthen or shorten the game.

Sub e. The team willfully and persistently violates any one of the rules after being warned by game officials.

Sub f. A team is unable to produce enough legal players to start, continue, or finish the game.

Sub g. If at any point the safety of game participants or game officials is in jeopardy.

Sec 2. The score of a forfeited game shall be seven runs to zero runs unless the game is forfeited after the required number of innings for a regulation game has been reached and the offending team is behind. In this case the score shall be recorded as the current score. If the forfeiting team is leading at the time of the forfeit the score shall be recorded as seven runs to zero runs.

## **ART 5. Batting Options**

Sec 1. A legal lineup shall consist of 9 batters with or without the incorporation of a DP/Flex, or Roster lineup batting.

Sec 2. Starter refers to the first 9 or 10 (if a designated player is used) players listed on the lineup card submitted to the game officials prior to the start of the game.

Sub a. Each starter is entitled to be replaced and to re-enter one time as long as she assumes her original spot in the batting order.

Sec 3. Substitute refers to a player not listed on the lineup card as a starter but who may legally replace one of the first 9 or 10 (if a designated player is used) players listed on the lineup card submitted to the game officials before the start of the game. A substitute who is removed may not reenter the game at any time for any reason.

Sec 4. A team may play and legally end the game with 1 batting position vacant which will result in an out being declared every time the vacant position is due to bat.

Sub a. A team may legally start a game with 1 vacant batting position which shall be placed in the last position in the batting order.

Sub b. If a team falls below 1 vacant batting position the game will be declared a forfeit.

Sec 4. If a vacant player is the batter or runner that player shall be declared out.

Sec 5. Eligible players on a team's roster may be added to the lineup at any point as a legal substitute.

#### Sec 6. ROSTER BATTING OPTION

Sub a. A team may incorporate as many additional EPs as necessary to bat their entire roster.

Sub b. Roster batting must be declared at the pre-game conference. All eligible players present must be included in the batting order. If a player is ineligible due to illness or injury she shall be ineligible for the entire contest.

Sub c. Under roster batting a team will not be penalized for vacant batting positions due to injury or illness until a team drops below 9 batters.

Sec 7. Each team shall have at minimum eight legally eligible players in the game at any given time.

Sub a. A team must have at minimum 8 batters to continue a game while taking an out for the vacant batting position.

Sub b. If at any point a team falls below 8 batters the game shall be declared a forfeit.

Sec 8. Eligible players on a team's roster may be added to the lineup at any point in the following precedence

Sub a. To fill a vacant batting position.

Sub b. At the bottom of the batting order.

## ART 6. Protest Process

Sec 1. Protests are to be allowed for player eligibility & misapplication of rules only. The team protesting must make a cash payment of \$100 to the Site Director at the time of the protest.

Sub a. Player Eligibility Protests. If the protest is ruled in the protesting team's favor the \$100 will be refunded. Protests must be filed before officials leave the field of play. EFFECT: If the protest is upheld the team in violation will be credited with a loss for the game and subsequently removed from the tournament. The team that filed the protest will be credited with a win. Official government documents used to verify age shall include, birth certificate, government ID, school ID with birthdate, medical records and other records deemed acceptable by tournament officials.

Sub b. If a Player eligibility protest arises from an incorrectly entered birthdate a \$50 fine will be assessed to the offending team.

Sec. 2 No refunds will be given for a team removed from a tournament as a result of a protest. 1<sup>st</sup> removal will result in a team warning, 2<sup>nd</sup> removal will result in team and/or coach being suspended from all PRIMETIME Softball events for the remainder of the season.

Sec 3. Misapplication of Rules Protest. This protest may only be used when an umpire has misapplied a rule. Judgment calls **MAY NOT** be protested at any time. Protest must be filed before home plate umpire leaves the field and a \$100 **NON-REFUNDABLE** protest fee must be paid at time of protest to tournament officials. If protest is upheld, the game will resume from the time the rule was mis-applied as determined by UIC and continue on.

## ART 7. Pitching Distances

Sec 1. Pitching distances are determined by the age division playing. 10U & Younger, 35 feet, 12U, 40 feet, 14U & UP, 43 feet

## ART 8.. Special Tournament Rules

Sec 1. If using Roster Batting and there is an injury:

Sub a. Batter; If a batter cannot fulfill her time at bat due to injury or illness, that player will be eliminated from that entire game. If the batter has a count the LCAB will complete the eliminated batters at current at bat. Her spot will be skipped in the batting order. Teams will not be required to take an automatic out UNTIL they drop below 9 players.

Sub b. Runner; If a runner cannot continue her time on the bases, that player will be substituted with the last batter not on base. She will not be allowed to participate in the remainder of the game. The line-up will compress when her spot comes to bat.

Sub c. Ejection; A player ejection while roster batting will result in the team losing that player for the entire game. Her spot in the batting order WILL be an automatic out.

Sec 3. Courtesy Runner will be allowed for pitcher and catcher at any time. The courtesy runner will be designated as the last batter not on base.

Sec 4. In "C" class divisions teams can score a maximum of 6 runs per half inning for all ages.

Sub a. Games will end at time limit if a team is down by more than 6 runs or what they are allotted left to score in that half inning.

Sec 5. Teams may begin a game with 8 players.

Sub a. Teams may add any and all players to the end of the line up. These players must be listed on the line-up card submitted prior to the game. If the players are not present for their time at bat, their spot will be skipped until they arrive with no automatic out being charged (unless below 9 players).

**ART 9. 6U, 8U, 8U Modified & 10U Modified Divisions shall include the following specific rules.**

Sec 1. On defense, 4 outfielders may be employed.

Sec 2. There will be an expanded strike zone in place for 10U.

Sec 3. Batters may not advance on a dropped 3rd strike.

Sec 4. No Infield Fly Rule.

**Sec 5. 8U Modified**

Sub a. Pitching: Live arm pitcher will pitch until one of the following a) 3 ball count, b) batter strikes out, c) batter is hit by pitch, or d) ball is put in play. When a 3 ball count is reached the coach pitcher will assume the pitcher position and pitch a) the remaining strikes or b) the ball is put in play with a maximum of 3 pitches. If the final pitch is fouled off the at bat will continue. There will be NO walks.

Sub b. Dropped 3rd Strike will **NOT** be in effect.

Sub c. **NO** Infield Fly.

Sub d. Stealing of bases is permitted when the live arm pitcher is in the circle **ONLY**.  
The Look Back Rule will be in effect.

## **ART 10. Coach Pitch Division Rules**

Sec 1. Coach Pitch Division games shall adhere to all Prime Time Softball rules with the following division specific rules.

Sec 2. Time limit shall be 60 min drop dead pool play and **60** minute finish the inning bracket play. Time begins at the conclusion of the pregame conference.

Sec 3. Teams may score a maximum of 6 runs per half inning unless otherwise posted in tournament information

Sub a. Once time has expired if a team is losing by the 1+ runs greater than the number of runs allowed in a half inning the game shall end.

Sec 4. Games shall be 5 innings or time limit

Sec 5. If Roster batting is used;

Sub a. If any player becomes sick or injured throughout the contest, they may be removed from the lineup and the lineup condensed. No penalty will be recorded until falling below 9 batters.

Sub b. If a player is ejected an out will be recorded each time the ejected player would be due to bat.

Sec 6. Playing Field: Bases at 60 ft., Pitching plate at 35ft., Pitching circle 8 ft. radius around the pitcher's plate. The ball is dead when the pitcher has control of the ball within the pitching circle or has stopped the lead runner.

Sec 7. Batting:

Sub a. An at bat will consist of 5 pitches or 3 swinging strikes. If the final pitch is fouled off the at bat will continue.

Sub b. There shall be no walks.



Sub c. Smash Bunting is not permissible. *Example, showing bunt, pulling back and hitting*

#### Sec 8. Baserunning:

Sub a. Runners are not allowed to steal or lead off. Runners may leave the base when the pitch is released.

Sub b. On batted balls once the pitcher is in possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle, or the defense has stopped the lead runner, baserunners must stop at the base they have obtained or the base they are running to provided the defense is not making a play on the runner.

Sub c. Courtesy runners are not allowed.

#### Sec 9. Defense:

Sub a. Defensive players may not be positioned in front of the coach pitching. Also, players may not move in front of the pitching coach until the ball has been put into play.

Sub b. All outfielders must remain behind the base lines of the infield until the ball is put into play.

Sub c. Two defensive coaches may be allowed on the field of play. Coaches must remain in foul territory.

Sub d. Teams will be allowed to utilize 4 outfielders.

Sub e. There is no infield fly rule or dropped 3rd strike.

Sub f. Pitcher (Coach) may not verbally or nonverbally coach batter or baserunners at any time after a pitch has been thrown.

#### Sec 10. Conferences

Sub a. Teams will be allowed 1 offensive & defensive conference per inning.

### **ART 11: Protective Equipment**

Sub a. 6U, 8U & 10U ALL players must wear a face guard.

Sub b. 12U ALL infield players must wear a face guard

Sub c. 14U & UP Faceguards are recommended, especially for pitchers, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> base but not required.

## **ART 12. Official Game Seeding/Tie Breaker**

### SEEDING RULES

1. Pool play overall record (winning percentage)
2. If two teams are tied -Head to Head winner
3. If three teams are tied – If one team has defeated both other teams, that team advances. If not go to #4.
4. Total runs allowed in pool play.
5. If still tied – Total runs scored in pool play
6. If still tied – Total runs allowed minus game with most runs allowed in pool play
7. If still tied – Total runs allowed minus two games with most runs allowed in pool play
8. If still tied – Runs scored inning by inning starting with first game until one team has more runs after a complete inning starting with pool games
9. Second place teams will always be taken ahead of 3rd place teams for wild cards, 3rd place ahead of 4th place, etc.

TIE BREAKERS – Games in pool play that are tied after time limit has expired shall be recorded as a tie. If a bracket game is tied after time has expired, the game will be continued using the International Tie Breaker Rule:

## **ART 13. Advancement of teams to higher classification**

### **Criteria to move up (\*minimum of 8 scored games)**

In class record of .700

1st or 2nd place finish in 2 out of 3 most recent events (# of teams & level will be considered)

In class run differential of 6 or more

Playing in 2-3 consecutive tournaments in a higher classification

### **Criteria to move down (\*minimum of 8 scored games)**

In class record of .300 or less

In class run differential of -5 or more

\*Minimum of 8 scored games or no less than 2 tournaments.

All classification moves will be reviewed by the PRIMETIME committee before being instated.

Teams may petition to reclassify 1 time per season.

#### **ART 14. Points**

Tournament Win/Gold Bracket 200

2<sup>nd</sup> Place 100

Sliver Bracket Winner 100

Silver Bracket 2<sup>nd</sup> Place 50

Game Win 10

#### **ART 15. Insurance**

All teams participating in PRIMETIME Softball Tournaments are required to carry team/participant liability insurance coverage OR sign a waiver stating team elects not to carry team insurance and releasing PRIMETIME Softball of all liability. PRIMETIME Softball carries event insurance policies for all PRIMETIME Softball tournaments venues; this liability insurance covers all individuals in attendance at the tournament except the participants (who are covered by a team insurance policy).

PRIMETIME Softball **must** be named as 'additionally insured' on the certificate. (this can be requested from the insurance provider, free of charge).

#### **PRIMETIME Softball 329 McAnulty Rd, Pottsville, AR 72858**

- Minimum Insurance Requirements:
  - General Liability \$1,000,000 occurrence / \$2,000,000 aggregate
  - Participant Medical \$25,000 each participant
  - Include the name of the team registered in the tournament(s) on the Certificate – a certificate for each team is required

#### **ART 16. Cancellation & Refund Policy**

##### CANCELLATION POLICY

If a coach/manager removes his team less than 1-week prior to a tournament, that team forfeits the full tournament entry fee. Failure to inform tournament director of team

cancellation could result in team no longer being allowed in future PRIMETIME Softball events.

#### INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE

In the event of inclement weather, an email and/or text message will be sent to the contact submitted online of each participating team; updated information will be posted on [www.primetimesoftball.net](http://www.primetimesoftball.net) regarding any changes in schedule.

#### REFUND POLICY

After a team has played two games, there will not be a refund/credit. If the tournament is rained out (or postponed due to unforeseen circumstances) and no games are played, the team will get full credit towards a future event.