

## 2026 IGHSAU Softball Adaptations

The 2026 National Federation Softball Rules book will be followed, subject to the following adaptations:

**Legal bats** – Rule 1-5 regarding bats will be followed with the following modification to 1-5-1d: Bats must meet the 2004 ASA Softball Bat Performance Standard, bear the ASA 2004 certification mark, and not be listed on the USA Softball non-approved bat list. Bats made entirely of wood are permitted and need not bear a USA Softball mark. Bats bearing the newer USA Softball Certified mark are legal. Bats with the 2000 certification mark are ILLEGAL. Here is a link to the USA webpage with further information:

[Certified Equipment - USA Softball](#)

These are the CORRECT certification marks:



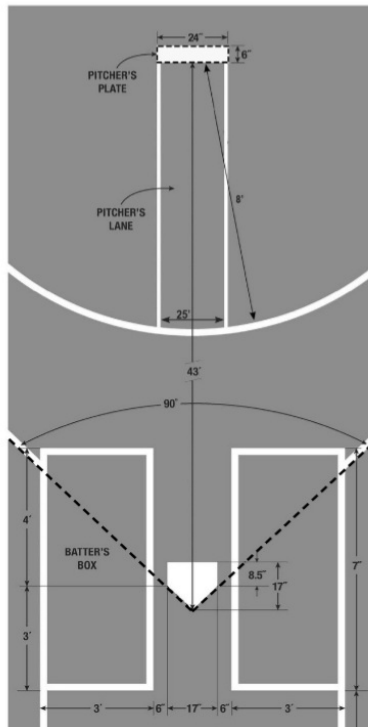
**Eye black and markings** – If eye black is used, it may only be worn in a straight line under the eye. No swoops or decorations are to be made with the eye black. If a player is wearing any facial decoration or marking (other than a straight line of eye black under the eye) that the umpire considers distracting—such as glitter, stickers, or colored designs—they will be asked to remove it or will not be able to play.

**Fence Covering** – Any fence that is less than six feet high and made of metal/steel shall be covered with a protective covering. This includes all fences on the diamond. There is no specific color required.

**Player Uniforms** – We will follow rule 1-6 regarding uniforms with the following exceptions: There shall be no advertising or sponsor's name on the uniform. If worn, headbands may be any color or multi-colored and do not have to match among teammates. Each headband may display only one manufacturer's logo,

which must not exceed 2 inches in length or width. Players found wearing uniforms or headbands that do not comply with these rules will be required to correct the issue before participating in play.

**Pitcher's lane** – Fields shall be lined as per rule NFHS rule 1-1 with the following addition: there shall be a field lines marked for a pitcher's lane as in the following diagram:



**Pre-game infield – Varsity only** – For regular season dual competition and regional tournament, both teams may take infield practice on the actual playing diamond. There is a seven-minute limit. The timing shall be done by the home management – preferably by the PA Announcer or scoreboard operator. A reminder shall be issued with one minute remaining. A team still has the option of hitting ground balls in front of its dugout in foul territory during the seven-minute warm up time if they prefer. But both teams must be allowed to use the playing diamond for their seven minutes if they choose. Regular season tournaments and sub-varsity warm up protocols remain at the discretion of the home management.

**Electronic devices** – NFHS rules allow for a catcher to wear an electronic device to receive signals from the coach. In addition, IGHSAU will also allow the pitcher to wear an electronic device for the same purpose. Any wrist device shall be worn on the glove arm.

**Umpire attire** – A powder blue polo shirt is REQUIRED for regular season varsity contests. The IGHSAU logo is recommended. A white polo shirt (including those with blue or red side panels) may be worn for sub-varsity games. Due to manufacturers' discontinuation of heather gray pants, either heather gray or charcoal gray may be worn for regular season contests. For 2027, charcoal gray pants will be required. Navy blue shirts may be worn for regular season ONLY if both umpires agree. The IGHSAU logo is recommended. Jackets if needed, may be all navy blue or navy blue with the white and blue shoulder inset. Charcoal gray pants and a powder blue polo shirt with the IGHSAU logo and a navy blue or black hat with the IGHSAU logo are REQUIRED to be worn in regional contests. Umpires chosen for the state tournament shall wear charcoal gray pants, powder blue or pink shirts, black or navy hats with the latest IGHSAU logo. Crews shall match. Pants for any contest may be pleated. Charcoal gray pants will become mandatory for all contests starting with the 2027 season

**Regular Season Game ending protocol** – At the varsity level, it is required to use a 10-run differential rule after 4 innings (3.5 innings if the home team is leading by 10 or more runs) and an 8-run differential rule after 5 or (4.5 innings if the home team is leading by 8 or more runs). At the sub-varsity level, the use of the run differential is optional. Note: all regular season games must comply with rule NFHS rule 4.2 to be considered a complete (regulation) game. This includes games played in weekend tournaments. Schools hosting tournaments should provide written communication on the game-ending procedures for the tournament to all teams, particularly when there is a time limit or weather delays. These game ending procedures should also be shared with umpires and discussed during each pre-game conference with coaches.

Note: all regular season games must be **legal complete** games, according to NFHS rule 4-2. This includes any games played in weekend tournaments. Schools hosting tournaments should provide written communication of the game-ending procedures for the tournament to the teams, particularly when there is a time

limit or weather delays. Those procedures should also be shared with umpires and discussed at the pre-game conference with coaches during the tournament.

**Tie Breaker** – When used in regular season games, the tie-breaker rule starts at the top of the 8<sup>th</sup> inning. To apply the rule, determine the first legal batter of the inning and then place the player immediately preceding her in the lineup on second base with no outs. If used during a regular season tournament, it is permissible to begin using the international tie-breaker rule before the 8<sup>th</sup> inning if the time limit has expired.

**Regular Season Suspended game** – Apply rule 4-2-1 and 4-2-2 to determine if you have a regulation game with a winner decided. If not, the game shall be suspended, and if made up later, the game shall resume from the point of interruption. Home team coaches shall keep the lineup cards from the game as umpires may be different for the makeup game.

**Protested games** – Rule 4-4 – The IGHSAU does not recognize protests.

**Post season suspended game protocol** – if a regional game is suspended due to weather, it shall be resumed from the point of suspension on the next playable date. Site administrators shall keep the umpire's line up cards for the resumption of the game as it is possible the umpires may be different for the make-up game. Additionally, postseason games halted by weather may not be resumed the same day if three hours have passed since the designated start time.