

# 100. General Regulations & Policies

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In accordance with Article 9 of the Bylaws, the following general regulations, policies and procedures governing the FHSAA Softball Program have been approved by the Board of Directors. They apply to all regular season contests as well as the FHSAA State Series unless otherwise modified or superseded by the terms and conditions approved for the state series. Substantive changes for the 2008-09 school year are shaded.

*[The FHSAA utilizes a standardized calendar in which the weeks of the year are numbered. This ensures consistent dates from year to year. Week 1 begins with the first Sunday in July. Thanksgiving always falls in Week 21.]*

*[The forms referenced in this manual are provided on FHSAA.org as downloadable PDF and/or Word documents.]*

## 101. Important Dates

*Monday, January 12 (Week 28) – First practice date.*

*Monday-Saturday, February 2-7 (Week 31) – Preseason classic tournaments.*

*Thursday, February 5 (Week 31)-Sunday, February 15 (Week 33) – Online rules presentation for coaches available in E-Classroom on FHSAA.org.*

*Monday, February 9 (Week 32) – First regular season competition date.*

*Saturday, April 11 (Week 40) – Last date for district game.*

*Monday, April 13 (Week 41) – 2009 FHSAA State Softball Series Official Entry List(s) and district tournament seeding information must be reported to district tournament manager.*

*Saturday, April 18 (Week 41) – Last regular season competition date.*

*Monday-Friday, April 20-24 (Week 42) – District tournaments.*

*Tuesday, April 28 (Week 43) – Regional tournament quarterfinal games.*

*Wednesday, April 29 (Week 43) – Regional tournament quarterfinal game winners must submit FHSAA Softball Finals team data form and photo to FHSAA Office.*

*Friday, May 1 (Week 43) – Regional tournament semifinal games.*

*Tuesday, May 5 (Week 44) – Regional tournament final games.*

*Wednesday, May 6 (Week 44) – FHSAA Softball Finals participants must submit up-to-date team statistics form to FHSAA Office.*

*Monday-Saturday, May 11-16 (Week 45) – FHSAA Softball Finals state championship tournament.*

## 102. Eligibility of Student-Athletes

**102.01** Only student-athletes eligible under Bylaw 11, as well as guidelines, regulations, policies and procedures governing student eligibility that have been adopted by the Board of Directors, may represent member schools in interscholastic competition. In accordance with Bylaw 11.13.1, member schools are required to certify the eligibility of their student-athletes before they participate and to withhold ineligible student-athletes from all interscholastic competition. See FHSAA.org for FHSAA student-eligibility guidelines.

**102.02** If an ineligible student-athlete is accidentally or intentionally permitted to participate in an interscholastic contest, forfeit of the contest and honors shall be automatic and mandatory.

## 103. Season and Contest Limitations

**103.01 Practice.** First practice date is Monday of Week 28 (Jan. 12, 2009). Last practice date is Saturday of Week 45 (May 16, 2009).

No practice session of any kind may be held on a Sunday.

**103.02 Contests.** First regular season contest date is Monday of Week 32 (Feb. 9, 2009). Last regular season contest date is Saturday of Week 41 (Apr. 18, 2009).

(1) Maximum number of regular season contests – 25, inclusive of all games played in regular season tournaments.

(2) The following combination of games in a school week are permissible:

- Three (3) games;
- One (1) game and one (1) tournament, not to exceed five (5) games total; or
- One (1) tournament, not to exceed five (5) games total.

No more than one school day or part of one school day may be missed in a week for traveling to, traveling from and participating in an athletic contest(s).

(3) No contest of any kind may be held on a Sunday except under emergency conditions in tournaments or meets that are approved by the Executive Director or the Board of Directors.

**103.03 Opponents.** Member schools shall compete only against schools that are full members or approved nonmembers of the FHSAA, or out-of-state schools that are members of associations that regulate interscholastic athletic competition within their respective states. Out-of-state schools, however, must have eligibility guidelines comparable to those of the FHSAA, and must have an established season of competition in the sport that is concurrent with that of the FHSAA. Competition with out-of-state schools, in some cases, may require the approval of the NFHS. See FHSAA.org for NFHS regulations on interstate and international competitions.

**103.04 Contracts.** The “Contract for Interscholastic Athletic Contest” (Form AT1) is required for all regular season contests.

Practice games, exhibition games, non-contract games and scrimmage games with other schools, groups, alumni or league teams are strictly prohibited. All such games or sessions shall be on an intra-squad basis. Non-squad members shall not participate in any team practice, game or contest.

### **103.05 Student-Athletes.**

(1) Maximum number of regular season contests – 25, inclusive of all games played on the varsity and sub-varsity levels, or in regular season tournaments.

A student who participates as a member of a varsity team shall not participate as a member of a sub-varsity team, or vice versa, until the day following such participation.

(2) The following combination of games in a school week are permissible:

- Three (3) regular games per week; or
- One (1) regular game and one (1) tournament, not to exceed five (5) total games.

No more than one school day or part of one school day may be missed in a week for traveling to, traveling from and participating in an athletic contest(s).

The Executive Director may, upon request of a member school, approve a fourth regular game to be played during a school week for the purpose of rescheduling a game previously postponed due to emergency reasons.

## 104. Invitational Tournaments

**104.01** All invitational tournaments (conference, county, league, etc.) hosted by senior high schools must have the approval of the FHSAA Office. The “Application for Approval of Multi-School Athletic Event” (Form AT2) must be submitted not less than 30 days in advance of the first day of the tournament to avoid a late fee of \$50. Approval forms received less than 10 days in advance of the first day of the tournament will incur a late fee of \$100, and forms received after the date of the event will incur a \$200 late fee. Contests or invitational tournaments hosted by middle schools, regardless of the number of participating teams, do not require the approval of the FHSAA Office.

**104.02** There is no limit on the number of regular season tournaments in which a team may participate. Each and every game played by a team in a tournament, however, shall count toward the team’s maximum limit of 25 games.

**104.03** Regular season tournaments:

(1) May have a maximum field of 32 teams (invitational tournaments exceeding 32 teams are subject to conditional approval by the Executive Director);

(2) May have single elimination, double elimination, round robin or pool play formats; and

(3) Must begin and end within the same one week (Monday-Saturday) unless held during a holiday period.

**104.04** No more than one school day or part of one school day may be missed in a week for traveling to, traveling from and participating in an athletic contest(s). This provision may be waived by the Executive Director to accommodate tournaments held as part of the state series.

**104.05** No junior varsity, junior high or other sub-varsity team may participate in a tournament involving a varsity team. Junior varsity, junior high and other sub-varsity tournaments, if held, must be held as separate events.

**104.06** An application fee of \$50 per each participating team shall be assessed the school/organization making the application to hold an invitational tournament. The FHSAA **shall not** receive any percentage of the receipts, and the host school/organization **shall not** be required to file a financial report form with the FHSAA Office.

**104.07** Certain invitational tournaments involving out-of-state schools may require the approval of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). See FHSAA.org for NFHS regulations on interstate and international competitions.

**104.08** FHSAA member schools participating in out-of-state events that require NFHS and/or FHSAA sanctioning shall be assessed a \$50 administrative fee. Out-of-state events which do not adhere to the guidelines of FSHAA policy will not be approved by the FHSAA Office.

## 105. Preseason Classics

**105.01** Preseason classic tournaments hosted by senior high schools must have the approval of the FHSAA Office. The “Application for Approval of Multi-School Athletic Event” (Form AT2) must be submitted not less than 30 days in advance of the first day of the event to avoid a late fee of \$50. Approval forms received less than 10 days in advance of the first day of the tournament will incur a late fee of \$100, and

forms received after the date of the event will incur a \$200 late fee.

**105.02** Sub-varsity preseason classics are prohibited.

**105.03** All NFHS Softball Rules shall apply to preseason classic tournaments.

**105.04** A fee of \$100.00 shall be assessed the school/organization making application for each preseason classic tournament. Preseason classic tournaments exceeding four (4) teams are subject to conditional approval by the Executive Director. The FHSAA **shall not** receive any percentage of the receipts, and the host school/organization **shall not** be required to file a financial report form with the FHSAA Office.

### **105.05 Preseason Classics.**

(1) Must be held on Monday through Saturday of Week 31 (Feb. 2-7, 2009).

(2) Must be hosted by a member school.

(3) Shall not be counted toward a participating team's win-loss record, team statistics or player statistics; no official FHSAA or NFHS records may include results of preseason classic tournaments.

(4) Limited to a field of four teams; each team may play a maximum of two games. Preseason classic tournaments exceeding four (4) teams are subject to conditional approval by the Executive Director.

## **106. Rules of Competition**

**106.01 Playing Rules.** NFHS Softball Rules, as modified by the FHSAA, are the official playing rules for all softball games.

(1) The following modifications to those rules have been adopted by the Board of Directors.

- **1-1-2(b) Pitching Distance (NFHS Approved Experiment).** The pitching distance shall be 43 feet for varsity and junior varsity teams for the 2009 fast-pitch softball season. (Middle school and junior high school teams may elect to use the 43 feet pitching distance or remain at the 40 feet distance, as long as the distance is stipulated in the game contract.)

- **1-1-5.** Players must be in the same uniform. Compression/bicycle shorts may be worn provided they are unadorned, in school colors, or black, white, or gray. They may be of the same length or slightly longer than the uniform short. Compression/bicycle shorts, trainer pants, etc. are prohibited as the uniform bottom.

- **1-3-1 Note 2.** A double first base is permitted.

- **1-3-4.** Ball may be white or optic yellow and must meet National Federation specifications in regards to COR .47, and shall not exceed 375 pounds in accordance with ASTM test methods. The host school will designate which color ball will be used. The Dudley Thunder Heat WT12FP yellow ball with red stitching is the official ball of the FHSAA Softball Finals and shall be used in all state series contests.

- **3-5-2, 3.** First base and/or third base coach's boxes may be occupied by a player or coach in team uniform. Any time a coach is in live-ball area to confer with players or an umpire, or to occupy a coach's box, the coach shall be attired in school uniform or jersey/coaching shirt with coaching shorts/slacks or warm-up suits (including fleece warm-ups) in school colors or colors of khaki, black, white or gray. Cotton t-shirts, cutoffs and/or any type of jeans are prohibited. All coaches must be dressed in the same apparel of the same color. Jackets are not considered part of the coach's uniform.

• **3-5-2, 3 Penalties.** A coach not dressed in appropriate attire shall not be permitted in the field of play following the pregame conference for the duration of the game or until the situation has been remedied.

• **3-6 (1, 7-20) Penalties.** Coaches or players will not be restricted to the dugout for violations of 3-6 (1, 7-20). If ejected, the coach will be removed from the coaching position and must exit the facility. Ejected players must remain in the dugout under the supervision of the head coach.

• **4-2-2.** The 10-run rule will be in effect after four-and-one-half or five complete innings.

• **4-2-3b.** When varsity and junior varsity teams are scheduled to play back-to-back on the same date, at the same site, and on the same field, no new inning may be started in a junior varsity game after one-and-one-half hours.

• **4-2-4 Note.** A game that has been called because of weather, mechanical failure or other conditions in which a winner cannot be determined will be treated as a suspended game. If the game is to be completed, it will be continued from the point of suspension, subject to the rules of the game. A game that has been called because of weather, mechanical failure or other conditions after four-and-one-half innings or five innings have been completed will be declared a completed game.

• **4-2-5.** Tie games are not permitted. If a game is tied and is called at the completion of the fifth inning or any complete inning thereafter, it will be continued under the provisions of Rule 4-2-3 as a suspended game.

• **4-3-1.** Suspended games procedure (see s.106.04).

• **4-5-1.** The decisions of the game officials are final. No protests will be allowed.

(2) The following modifications to National Federation Rules HAVE NOT been adopted by the FHSAA Board of Directors:

<u>Rule</u>	<u>Modification</u>
4-2-3 Note 2	Game-ending procedures.
4-2-6	Game-ending procedures (tie-breaker).

**106.02 Pitching Warm-Up Areas.** Warm-up areas inside the field are allowed provided the field has 25 feet or more from the foul line to the fence. All players (pitcher, catcher, protective player) must wear helmets, and an assistant coach or player must be present to protect the pitcher/catcher while the pitcher is warming up. *Exception:* A pitcher who is facing the field of play and can see all action may elect not to wear the helmet.

**106.03 Athletic Uniforms.** Commercial advertising, with the exception of the manufacturer's logo as permitted by NFHS rules, is prohibited on all athletic uniforms.

**106.04 Suspended Contest.** A suspended contest shall be resumed from the point of interruption. Otherwise, NFHS Rules regarding the resumption of suspended contests will apply.

**106.05 Protests.** Protests of interscholastic contests shall not be allowed. The decision of the officials shall be final. The outcome (i.e. winners and losers) of all interscholastic contests are final, and cannot be reversed, except where the rules of the sport permit or in the case where a winner must forfeit its victory or points.

**106.06 Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs).** It is strongly recommended that an automated external defibrillator (AED) be present and available

for use if needed at the site of every interscholastic athletic contest conducted during the preseason and regular season in which member schools participate.

## **107. Sportsmanship and Unsporting Conduct**

**107.01 Sportsmanship.** Student-athletes, coaches, administrators, spectators and all other persons connected directly or indirectly with a member school, as well as contest officials, shall adhere to the principles of good sportsmanship and the ethics of competition before, during and after all contests in which they participate and/or attend.

Each participating school shall be held strictly accountable for unsporting conduct on the part of its competitors, coaches and spectators.

If contestants or people from any school are found guilty of carelessness or maliciously breaking, damaging or destroying property or equipment belonging to the host school or host organization, such school will be held responsible for costs incurred in replacing or repairing such property or equipment.

### **107.02 Disciplinary action for unsporting conduct.**

(1) **Student-Athlete.** Suspended from competition for remainder of contest and all contests on all levels for the following seven days, but not less than the next two regularly scheduled contests (one contest in boys football); if last contest of season, suspension is served in the next sport in which the student-athlete participates; beginning with fourth such ejection in a sport, program in that sport is placed on administrative probation and school is assessed a \$100 fine per occurrence in that sport.

(2) **Coach.** Suspended from competition for remainder of contest and all contests on all levels for the following seven days, but not less than the next two regularly scheduled contests (one contest in boys football); if last contest of season, suspension is served in the next sport in which the individual coaches; school is assessed a minimum fine of \$100 per occurrence. All coaches who have been ejected from a contest must complete the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) Fundamentals of Coaching Course. This course is accessible through the E-Classroom icon on FHSAA.org. This must be completed by the end of the suspension. A copy of the coach's certificate of completion must be forwarded to the FHSAA Office.

### **107.03 Disciplinary action for gross unsporting conduct (Bylaw 11.11.2), or for second or subsequent act of general unsporting conduct or flagrant foul.**

(1) **Student-Athlete.** Suspended from competition for remainder of contest and all contests on all levels for up to a period of six weeks; if last contest of season, suspension is served in the next sport in which the student-athlete participates; beginning with second such ejection in any sport, school is assessed a \$250 fine per occurrence. Second or subsequent acts of a gross unsporting nature may result in ineligibility for a period of one calendar year and/or the possibility of permanent loss of eligibility for the duration of the student-athlete's high school career.

(2) **Coach.** Suspended from competition for remainder of contest and all contests on all levels for up to a period of six weeks; if last contest of season, suspension is served in the next sport in which the individual coaches; school is assessed a minimum fine of \$100 per occurrence. Second or subsequent acts of a gross unsporting nature may result in ineligibility for a period of one calendar year.

#### **107.04 Restrictions on Disqualified Coach.**

(1) Must immediately leave the competition area to a place where he/she is not visible to student-athletes, officials, spectators or other coaches and where he/she cannot see the competition itself.

(2) Must not have any further contact with or give instruction to student-athletes or other members of his/her staff for the remainder of the contest; including halftime intermission; breaks between quarters, periods or innings; and post-contest activities.

(3) Shall not attend any subsequent contest from which he/she has been suspended in any capacity; shall not be present at the site; and shall not accompany his/her team to the site of the contest.

**107.05 Enforcement.** It is the responsibility of local school authorities to ensure this policy is enforced. When an ineligible student-athlete is allowed to participate, forfeiture of the contest is mandatory. When a coach is allowed to coach in a contest from which he/she has been suspended, the school shall face additional penalties. When a coach is disqualified (ejected) from a contest and no other authorized school personnel are present to take charge of the student-athletes, the contest shall be forfeited. Contest officials, or host schools for contests in sports in which there are no registered officials, must report acts of unsporting conduct to the FHSAA Office using Form AT6.

**107.06 Additional Penalties.** In addition to the standard monetary penalty of \$100 for the disqualification (ejection) of a coach, a school may be assessed additional minimum fines for unsporting conduct by the coach or other school personnel as follows:

- Use of profanity or gutter language – \$150.00
- Continuing to give instruction to student-athletes or other members of the coaching staff after having been disqualified from a contest – \$150.00
- Pursuit of officials following a contest – \$150.00
- Refusal to leave the court, playing field or team area following disqualification – \$100.00
- Physical contact with an official – \$250.00
- Removal of a team or individual from an athletic contest prior to its normal conclusion – \$250.00
- Storming the playing field, court or pool before, during or after an athletic contest – \$500.00

**107.07 Appeals of Disciplinary Action for Unsporting Conduct.** The decision to disqualify (eject) a student-athlete or coach from a contest is a decision of the contest official and, per Bylaw 9.1.2, not subject to review by the Association, but that penalties in excess of the minimums prescribed may be appealed to the Executive Director, and from there through the normal appeals structure, providing that the ineligibility (suspensions) remain in effect until modified or reversed.

**107.08 Public Criticism of Officials.** No coach or other school employee may publicly criticize or berate an official prior to, during or following a contest. Professional ethics require that coaches and other school employees use proper channels to report their complaints about officials rather than airing them publicly. A minimum fine of \$50 shall be assessed a school whose coach or other employees are in violation of this provision.

#### **107.09 Crowd Control.**

(1) The home school administration is responsible for the control of spectators during a contest. The presence of uniformed officers is recommended.

(2) The visiting school administration is encouraged to assist with the control of its own spectators. Visiting school administrators (i.e., principal, FHSAA representative, assistant principals and athletic director) who are required by their principal to attend the event for supervisory purposes upon presentation of a photo I.D. must be provided complimentary admission to the event, provided the visiting school submits their names to the home school administration by fax in writing on school stationery not less than 24 hours prior to the scheduled starting time of the event.

(3) The officials assigned to officiate a contest are responsible for the conduct of the contest itself. In the event, however, a spectator or group of spectators interferes with the conduct of a contest or causes an official to become distracted through continual, unrelenting verbal abuse, the official should immediately stop the action and report the spectator or group of spectators to the home school administration or the nearest uniformed security officer and ask that they be restrained or removed from the facility. If the home school administration or uniformed security officer is unwilling or unable to comply and the official does not believe the contest can be safely continued, the official must declare the contest ended at that point. Under no circumstance should an official ever confront, challenge, rebuke or threaten a spectator, or make gestures of any kind toward a spectator before, during or after a contest.

(4) The officials assigned to officiate a contest and the home school administration are required to file with the FHSAA Office by fax within 24 hours a written report on any contest that is disrupted or terminated due to interference by a spectator(s).

### **107.10 Banned Substances.**

(1) The use of alcohol, tobacco or tobacco-like products by student-athletes, coaches and officials is prohibited during any interscholastic athletic contest and in the vicinity of the playing field or court. A student-athlete in violation of this policy is guilty of gross unsporting conduct, will be disqualified from the contest and shall be suspended from subsequent contests in accordance with the provisions of s. 107.03(1). The official must report any violation of this policy by either a student-athlete or coach to the FHSAA Office. Violation of this policy by a student-athlete or coach shall subject the school to a monetary penalty. Violation of this policy by an official shall subject the official to a monetary penalty or suspension or both. For violations of this policy, a minimum fine of \$100.00 shall be assessed.

(2) The use of anabolic steroids or other performance-enhancing drugs by a student-athlete is not permissible and is considered to be an act of gross unsporting conduct. A student-athlete discovered to be using such substances shall be ineligible to compete in any interscholastic contest until such time as medical evidence can be presented that the student's system is free of those substances.

## **108. Inclement Weather Procedures**

If a severe thunderstorm or electrical storm occurs in the area prior to the start of or during any outdoor contest, the officials must immediately contact the principal or his/her designee of each school involved in the contest to determine if the contest should be played as scheduled, delayed, suspended or postponed. If the principal or his/her designee of either of the schools involved requests that the contest be interrupted or postponed, the officials must immediately honor such request. If the principal or his/her designee of only one of the competing schools is available, his/her request must be honored.

(1) The safety and welfare of all concerned is of paramount importance. In no case shall an official deny a request by a principal to delay, suspend or postpone an outdoor contest due to inclement weather or imply that the contest will be forfeited as a result of such a request.

(3) A suspended contest shall be resumed from the point of interruption under the provisions of the rules of the game.

## **109. Filming, Videotaping Contests**

**109.01** A visiting school may film, videotape or photograph its team's or contestants' performance in a contest when permission is secured from and arrangements are made with the host school principal. Videographers and their equipment must be positioned so that they do not block the view of any spectator. No representative of a school that is not participating in a contest may film, videotape or photograph all or any part of the contest unless permission to do so is granted by the principal of each school that is participating in the contest.

**109.02** Any school violating this policy is guilty of unsporting conduct and shall be subject to reprimand and the assessment of a financial penalty by the FHSAA.

## **110. Officials**

**110.01 Registered Officials.** All member schools must use FHSAA registered contest officials in softball games in which they participate. The crew for regular season games must consist of a minimum of two umpires. The decisions of the contest officials shall be final. No protests shall be allowed.

Guidelines, regulations, policies and procedures governing the FHSAA contest officials program are published in the 2008-09 FHSAA Officials Guidebook, a copy of which has been provided to each member school. That publication also is available for download as a PDF document on FHSAA.org.

**110.02 Fees.** The maximum fees a member school may pay officials for a regular season contest are:

- Varsity game (two officials) – \$45 per official
- Varsity game (three officials) – \$40 per official
- Sub-varsity game – \$35 per official

Sixty (60) cents per mile one way, one vehicle, is the maximum mileage rate that may be charged by a local officials association.

**110.03 Schools' Responsibilities to Officials.** The Board of Directors has charged member schools with the following responsibilities relative to FHSAA officials when serving as host for an athletic contest to which officials are assigned.

(1) An authorized representative of the host school must greet the officials upon their arrival.

(2) The host school shall provide a private, secure place for the officials to park.

(3) The host school should provide a secure dressing facility which affords privacy.

(4) The host school should provide the officials access to private shower facilities with hot water whenever possible.

(5) The host school should provide the officials with refreshments (i.e., water and/or sports drinks) during the halftime intermission, following the conclusion of the

contest and other appropriate times.

(6) The host school must provide pregame, halftime and postgame security for the officials. A school official or principal's designee must escort the officials to and from the playing field or court to prevent harassment.

(7) The host school principal or game administrator must indicate to the referee or umpire-in-chief his/her seat location should a situation develop where assistance is needed during the contest.

(8) School personnel, including coaches, must not enter the officials dressing facility while the officials are in attendance except when requested by the officials.

## **111. Coaches**

**111.01** The head coach is required to complete the FHSAA Online Rules Presentation. The rules presentation for coaches will be available Feb. 5-15, 2009 in the E-Classroom on FHSAA.org. The financial penalty for failure to complete this requirement is \$50.