

NJSIAA Softball Rules Modifications 2024

These modifications are in accordance with NFHS 2024 rule book page 87

Game Halted, Suspended, Ended

Rule 2, Section 25, Article 1 (p. 25)

Rule 4, Section 2 (p. 44)

Approved for all tournament and regular season play. A tournament game is resumed from the point of suspension at a later date. A regular season game is resumed at a later date if not already a regulation game.

Uniforms

Rule 3, Section 2, Article 1 (p. 33)

Players may participate while wearing a different style uniform for religious reasons (notification to NJSIAA) or inclement weather.

Conduct

Rule 3, Section 6, Article 13 (p. 41)

Eye black is to be used as intended with one single color and one single line under the eye to prevent sun glare. No intimidating “unsporting” marking on the face or under the eyes are permitted. Smearing is not a violation.

Conduct

Rule 3, Section 6 (p. 40)

The head coach provides proper supervision of all players at all times. NJSIAA procedures supersede a playing rule which requires a coach or player to leave the premises upon disqualification. An ejected player is confined to the bench area to remain under the supervision of the head coach. If the ejected player remains disruptive or unsportsmanlike the umpire may terminate the game.

Line-Up Card

Rule 3, Article 3 (p. 32)

The head coach presents the umpires with a completed lineup card. When exercising the DP/Flex option, the designated player is listed in her position of the batting order and the flex player she is batting for is listed in the tenth position.

Line up cards should be in triplicate for the home team, the visitors and the umpire-in-chief.

Ending a Game

Rule 4, Section 2, Article 3 and Article 7 (p. 44-45)

Only the umpire may end a game.

The 10-run rule: If after 5 innings of play, the visiting team is ahead by 10 runs, or 4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead by 10 runs the game ends.

The 15-run rule: If after 4 innings of play, the visiting team is ahead by 15 runs, or 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead by 15 runs, the game may be ended with the consent of both coaches and the umpire.

Tie-Breaking Procedure

Rule 4, Article 5-6 (p. 44)

At the top of the 10th inning and during each half inning used to enforce the tie breaker, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that half inning being placed at second base. A substitute may be inserted for the runner.

Forfeit

Rule 4, Section 3, Article 1a, (p. 45)

An umpire may terminate a game but only the NJSIAA may declare a forfeit.

Protests

Rule 4, Section 4 (p. 45)

Not permitted

Illegal Bat

Rule 7, Section 4, Article 2, (p. 61)

Penalty: When the illegal bat is an altered or non-approved bat, the batter and head coach are ejected. Damaged bats are not illegal and are removed from the game without penalty. This does not carry the additional penalty of the NJSIAA Disqualification Rule.

Double Base: (1-2-1 Note)

Intended to limit potential collisions and injuries

Size is 15 inches by 30 inches

White base in fair territory and a colored base in foul territory

A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion is fair

A batted ball hitting or bounding over the colored bag is foul

With some exceptions, the defense touches the white bag while the batter-runner uses the colored portion.

If a batter-runner arrives before the ball but uses only the white portion of the bag it is treated as missing the bag. The defense must properly appeal before the batter-runner returns to touch either portion of the base.

For a first base collision on fair or foul throws coming from the third base side, the umpire must determine if it was incidental contact, interference or obstruction. If the batter-runner collides with the fielder who is only on the white portion of the bag attempting to catch the ball, it is interference. If the fielder is only standing on the colored portion of the bag and there is a collision prior to the fielder catching the ball, it is obstruction. If both players are doing what they are supposed to do and there is a collision, it may be incidental contact with no penalty.

If a throw is from the foul side of the first base line or if an errant throw pulls the fielder into foul territory, the fielder and batter-runner may use either base. Umpires must determine if there is malicious or incidental contact or obstruction.

The double base becomes one big base when a batter-runner is required to run to first base and no play is being made on her.

A runner may touch either base when she:

- Has no play being made on her
- Is returning to the bag
- Tags up to advance on a fly ball
- Prepares to leave the base on a pitch release

A fielder may also use either base when making a play on a returning runner.

Sub-Varsity Games

Leagues and conferences can establish sub-varsity game modifications with approval of the NJSIAA.

Sub-Varsity Extra Hitter and Defensive Substitution

This allows for wider sub-varsity student/athlete participation by adding an extra hitter to the batting order and permission for free defensive position substitution. Sub-varsity coaches may switch player defensive positions without impacting the batting line up and without notification to the plate umpire or opposing coach.

1. The extra hitter (EH) and defensive substitution are for sub-varsity softball.
2. An EH can be added to the line-up anywhere in the batting order at the pregame line-up exchange between the head coach and the umpires.
3. The batting order cannot be changed once the line-up is approved by the head coach and accepted by the home plate umpire at the pregame meeting.
4. The use of an extra hitter does not prevent a sub-varsity team from also applying the DP/Flex rule prior to the game.
5. Use of the EH and Flex causes the Flex to be listed in the 11th position.
6. A sub-varsity team with an extra hitter and no available substitutes which experiences an injury to a starting player shall have the injured player's spot in the batting order skipped without penalty.
7. However, the batting position of a player ejected from the game, without an available substitute, shall be deemed an automatic out in the line-up.
8. Batting order changes must consist of re-entry at the same spot in the line-up.
9. Defensive position changes are permitted without umpire consultation with the exception of a pitching change. The opposing team and home plate umpire shall be notified of all pitching changes.
10. Conference rules supersede this when a game is in-conference.
11. Non-conference opponents are not required to invoke the free defensive player substitution rule if one of the two head coaches' objects.

UMPIRE MECHANIC MODIFICATIONS

Pick-Off Play at First Base

A pick-off play at first base is called by the plate umpire if the field official is in the “C” or “D” positions.

Working “The Rim”

This mechanic is permissible in lieu of the “Button Hook” base umpire movement. Example: Nobody on base. “A” position field umpire. Fly ball or base hit to left or center field. Base umpire moves into fair territory along the grass / dirt cut out line or “rim.” Base umpire watches the batter-runner touch first base while jogging or walking briskly along with the batter-runner as she makes the base turn. If it is an obvious extra-base hit or long fly ball that may or may not be caught, the base umpire watches the touch and then cuts behind the batter-runner preparing for a play or the touch at second and/or third base (Unless the plate umpire verbally indicates he/she has the possible play at third). The base umpire must maintain sight of the batter-runner and the ball. A fly ball or base hit to right field shall revert the “A” position base umpire to the traditional “Button Hook” mechanic (Unless he/she goes out for fair/foul and/or trouble ball call).

The Rim mechanic is permissible from all field umpire starting positions; however, maintaining sight of base responsibilities and ball location is essential.

Third Base Coverage

Aside from taking the lead runner into third base, it is permissible for the plate umpire to take third for a batter-runner’s extra base hit. This is reviewed during the pregame crew conversation and reinforced with on-field verbal communication.

Check Swing Appeal

In a two-person crew, it is permissible for the plate official to seek partner assistance after an appeal request for a pitch called a ball, regardless of the base umpire’s field location.

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