

National Federation Softball Rules 2015

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Pertinent Dates:

March 23: Pitcher/Catchers (10)	March 30: First Full Team Practice	April 16: (after 3PM) First Countable Game
June 3: Last Countable Game	June 9: Regional Prelim	June 11: Regional Quarter Final
June 13: Regional Semifinal	June 16: B & D Regional Finals	June 17: A & C Regional Finals
June 20: State Finals (A @ Cony High School, B & D @ St. @ Joseph's College, C @ Brewer High School)		

Maine Principal's Association Web site at : <http://www.mpa.cc/>
This handout is available at : <http://www.wmbfsu.org/>

2015 MPA Umpire Fees:

Varsity: \$57.50

All Sub-Varsity: \$40.50

By State Association Adoption:

Many notes in the National Federation Rules Book start with: "By state association adoption. . ." They are listed throughout the rules books and summarized on page 83. The only rules from this list that have been adopted in Maine are 1-2-1 Note, 8-10, 4-2-3 and 4-2-6. Rule 4-2-3 refers to game-ending procedures and 4-2-6 is the tie-breaker procedure (see below). Rule 1-2-1 Note and 8-10, are references allowing a double first base. In addition to adopting a double first base, the MPA has made the double first base **REQUIRED IN ALL HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL GAMES**. If a double first base is not available for any HIGH school game, then the game will NOT be played. This includes, varsity, JV, and freshman. The game will be rescheduled at the discretion of the schools.

Other State Association Issues:

- Over the last couple years, I have been asked on several occasions what umpires should do if the coach is ejected and no assistant coach or game administration is available. The MPA softball committee has directed me to inform umpires that it is the school's responsibility to see that all coaches are certified. If a substitute coach is provided, then umpires are to assume that the coach is certified and allow the game to continue. If it is later determined that a non-certified coach was used, the committee will take disciplinary action with the school. This is not an umpire issue.
- The rules book states that the catcher's head, face, and throat protector must be commercially manufactured and may be one piece. The MPA softball committee has an additional requirement that a "separate, attached throat protector" must be worn by all catchers and any non-adult warming up a pitcher within the confines of the field." This MPA requirement has been modified to allow the ice hockey style helmet to be worn without a separate attached throat protector. However, all other masks must still have a separate attached throat protector.

Game Ending Procedures:

As is stated in rule 4-2-3, a state may adopt game ending procedures to determine how a game may end in specific situations. These situations include:

Tiebreaker Procedure (4-2-6): If, after the completion of twelve innings of play, the score is tied, the following tiebreaker will be used in both regular season and all playoff games:

Starting with the top of the thirteenth inning and each half-inning to follow, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat ninth in that half inning being placed on second base (e.g., if the No. 5 batter is the leadoff batter for that inning, the batter in batting position No. 4 will be placed on second base).

The runner placed on second base may be either a legal substitute or a courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher.

12 Run Rule: The MPA has adopted a run rule which terminates a game when a team, anytime after five innings (4 1/2 if the home team is ahead-this can happen in the 6th inning as well), is twelve runs ahead. This rule applies to all levels of high school play; varsity, JV, frosh, and first team. At all levels the twelve-run rule may be waived by mutual consent of the schools involved prior to the start of the game. Without such agreement, the twelve-run rule will remain in effect. Note: The twelve-run rule is in effect during regional and state tournament competition and may not be waived by the involved schools.

Tie Game (4-2-5): If after five or more innings a game is stopped due to inclement weather and a winner cannot be determined, it will be recorded as a tie game in each team's record and in the Heal point standings. Note: If the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bat, the score will be the same as it was at the end of

the last completed inning unless the home team scores a run or runs to equal or exceed the opponent's runs, in which case, the final score shall be as recorded when the game is called (see 4-2-b).

Suspended Games: Any game that is not official and is stopped, if replayed, will be replayed from the beginning.

In the State of Maine, due to traveling distances, partial games will NOT be played.

Note: The rule allowing scheduled five inning games (4-2-3 Note 2) has NOT been adopted. You may not schedule five inning games, even if the games are part of a double header. Doing so may result in a forfeit for both teams.

2015 NFHS Softball Rules Changes

- **Helmets (1-6-1, 1-7-1):** The rules were revised to state that the batting helmet and the catcher's helmet shall have a non-glare surface (not mirror-like).

2015 MAJOR EDITORIAL CHANGES

- **Clarification (1-6-1, 1-6-6, 1-7-1):** The language has been revised in the three rules to state that the helmet must meet the NOCSAE standard "at the time of manufacture" instead of at the "point" of manufacture.
- **Live ball (5-1-4):** The words "gives a beckoning hand signal" were removed from the rule. It now states, "after a dead-ball situation, the ball becomes live when it is held by the pitcher on the pitcher's plate and the umpire calls and/or signals, "Play ball." The committee felt the current wording does not reflect current practice of umpires. The change also clarifies rule 8-6-18, which requires the baserunner to keep in contact with the base until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand, as to whether ball is live or dead should runner leave her base when the pitcher is outside the pitcher's circle.
- **Time of appeal (7-1-1, 2 Pen.2):** The editorial change reflects the wording used in rule 2-1-4 regarding the time when appeals must be made, which is, "before all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher vacates her normal fielding position." The key wording in the second penalty of rule 7-1-1 and 7-1-2 that has been changed includes "fair territory" from "diamond" because fair territory is a different area than the diamond, according to the rules committee.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices. Technology has presented coaches and players with a wide variety of devices that can be used for their improvement. Rule 1-8-6 allows for team personnel to utilize technology to transmit or record information pertaining only to their players or team's performance within their team dugout or bench area.

The information obtained from an electronic device may be used for coaching purposes during the game, but only in the team's dugout or bench area. During the game no electronic devices are allowed on the field to video record. Rule 3-6-10 allows for stopwatches and electronic scorekeeping devices in the coaching box. Rule 3-6-11 prohibits the use of any information obtained from an electronic device to review a decision made by an umpire. Any video recording solely targeting the actions of the opponent is prohibited.

INTERFERENCE

Interference is defined by rule 2-32 as an act (physical or verbal) by a member of the team at bat who illegally impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder; or when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder with or without the ball, inside or outside of the baseline.

Those acts may be physical or verbal, and intentional or unintentional. Umpires should be aware of where the ball is and where the opposing team's fielders and baserunners are in relationship to the ball.

OBSTRUCTION

Obstruction is defined by rule 2-36 as the act of a defensive team member that hinders or impedes the progress of a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases, unless the fielder is in possession of the ball, or is making the initial play on a batted ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal.

Umpires should know defenders cannot hinder or impede any runner when they are not making a play on a ball or have the ball in their possession. Know where the defenders are on the field in relationship to who is running the bases.