



2012 SOFTBALL RULES CHANGES

1-3-1 The color “white” was removed from the list of permissible colors for softballs. All softballs used for competition must now be optic yellow.

Rationale: The “white” language was out of date and white softballs were not being used in the field. The change will assist schools in ordering and manufacturers in producing, the actual product being used in the field.

1-5-2a The requirement that the bat knob protrude at a 90-degree angle from the handle was removed.

Rationale: There are bats on the market that meet the ASA Bat Performance Standard but do not meet the 90-degree provision due to the handle being shaped like an ax. The rules committee is primarily concerned with the performance portion of the bat – the barrel – especially when other portions of the bat do not pose any undue risk to participants.

3-2-5 Headwear requirements were revised and clarified. Headwear (caps, visors, headbands, ribbons, etc.) may be mixed, but if worn, they must be white, black, beige or school colors (the colors are not required to be the same for team members). The logo may be any color. Flat items, no longer than 2 inches, used to control the hair, such as bobby pins, barrettes and hair clips are permitted. Plastic visors, bandannas and hair-beads are prohibited.

Rationale: Permitting more colors and options for players regarding headwear is consistent with other NFHS sports. A less restrictive rule may improve enforcement and school spirit. The exception formerly found in 3-2-12 has been moved into the new text of 3-2-5.

**7-4-2
Penalty** A more severe penalty was added when a batter has used an altered or non-approved bat. In addition to an out being called on the batter, the batter and head coach will be ejected from the contest.

Rationale: Coaches and players must be held accountable for using this type of illegal bat. Coaches must be responsible for the equipment being used in each game, even when it is not issued by the school, but a player’s personal equipment. Player safety and the integrity of the game must be maintained and this type of illegal equipment has no place in the game.

2012 MAJOR EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-5-1c Clarified that shaving, rolling or artificially warming the bat barrel are prohibited.

Rationale: Recent data indicates a significant improvement to bat performance when bat warmers are used (approximately 2 MPH to batted ball speed). The clarification now clearly states the prohibition in the rule, not just in a Point of Emphasis.

2-4 The definitions of legal and illegal bats were revised and updated.

Rationale: Clarification for proper penalty administration.

2-5-3; 3-5-6; Several rules were updated and reorganized to clarify offensive interference.

7-5 New; 7-

4-12; 8-6-15;

8-6-16 New

Rationale: The rules indicated were all related, yet inconsistently described/penalized.

3-2-13

NOTE

The Note was revised to clarify that state associations may grant exceptions to NFHS playing rules for participants with disabilities, special needs and/or extenuating circumstances.

Rationale: Clarifies that an individual state association may authorize exceptions to the playing rules to provide reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and/or special needs or other unique and extenuating circumstances. Such exceptions are not considered rules modifications since they are not general in nature; rather, they are limited to the circumstances of specific individual participants.

8-9-2

New

Exception

The courtesy-runner procedure was clarified.

Rationale: Clarified the procedure when the pitcher/catcher on the lineup card is unable to face the first batter in the bottom of the first inning due to injury/disqualification.

10-1-2

New

Note

A note was added clarifying the administrative responsibilities of umpires through the completion of required reports.

Rationale: The administrative duties of game officials continues after the game to document actions which occur during the game. This revision illustrates the difference between the game officials' jurisdiction during the game and other administrative responsibilities such as submitting specific reports after the game. In addition, State Associations may continue to develop and implement policies that allow for review of unusual incidents that occur while the game officials have jurisdiction or after the game.

2012 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Pitching
2. Legal Apparel and Equipment
3. On-Deck Batter/Location