

Highlighted text indicates changes from standard FPN rules.

PlayFPN Tournament Rules at Fastpitch Nation Park 8/1/2026

Reference Document: PlayFPN_Tournament_Rules_8-1-26.pdf

1. Current National Federation of High School (NFHS) Softball Rules and Regulations will apply to Fastpitch National Park Tournaments unless modified below in this document. The NFHS Softball Rules Book is Available for purchase on the NFHS website. It is the responsibility of ALL coaches to be familiar with the playing rules.
2. At least one Umpire-In-Chief (UIC) will be on-site during Tournaments. In the event an on-field issue cannot be resolved by the field umpires, the UIC will be called to the field.
3. Tournament Formats: Pool Play to single elimination or double elimination (Unless determined otherwise by the Tournament Director).
4. Game Play
 - a. The game is under the control of the umpires on the field, and teams must be prepared to play 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time, except for the first game of the day. If circumstances permit, umpires will start games early to help keep the tournament on schedule.
 - b. All games will have time limits except the finals.
 - i. Pool Games
 1. The game length is 1:20; complete the inning, if necessary.
 2. If the home team is ahead and batting when the time expires, the game is over. Pool games can end in a tie, and the international tiebreaker is never used in pool play.
 - ii. Bracket Games
 1. The game length is 1:20; complete the inning, if necessary.
 - a. If the home team is ahead and batting when the time expires, the game is over.
 - b. During elimination play, if the home team is up and winning when the clock reaches 1:20, the at-bat concludes, and the game is over. This is because the home team does not need additional runs to advance in bracket play.
 - iii. Finals and Double Elimination "If Necessary" Games
 1. 7 Innings (6 Innings for 10U)
 - a. No clock is used unless it's determined to require one due to weather, light, or other circumstances. Then the timing rules for bracket games are used
 - iv. The clock begins immediately after the pre-game plate conference.
 1. Game time is in the control of the umpires.
 2. The clock is not stopped for any reason except in these circumstances:
 - a. The clock is stopped if an injury requires the injured person to

remain on the field while an ambulance is called to transport the injured person. The UIC and the Tournament Director are the only people authorized to stop the clock. The clock is not automatically stopped for an injury.

- b. The clock is not stopped to make repairs to the field, such as replacing a base or raking a hole.
- c. Once the clock is officially stopped, time is never added back onto the clock unless authorized by the UIC or the Tournament Director.

3. The scoreboard clock is NOT the official clock. We ask that a volunteer from the home team operates the scoreboard controller.

- v. Every effort will be made to complete every scheduled game within the scheduled time limit. In the event of weather delays, darkness, or an uncontrollable/unforeseen circumstance, the Tournament Director reserves the right to reduce the time limits of all remaining games and/or change the format of the tournament to reach the conclusion and determine a winner. It is also the Tournament Director's discretion if standard "official game" rules (4½ innings or 3½ innings (10U) if the home team is ahead) are used or another means, such as 1 completed inning or "complete the batter," to complete the game and determine a game's winner.
- vi. In single elimination, if a championship game is called due to weather, darkness, or an uncontrollable/unforeseen circumstance, and the game is tied, the higher-seeded team from pool play shall be declared the winner and awarded one run.
- vii. In double-elimination play, if a championship game is called due to weather, darkness, or an uncontrollable/unforeseen circumstance, and the game is tied, the winner's bracket winner shall be declared the winner and awarded one run.
 - 1. In the case of the "if-necessary" game, the higher-seeded team from pool play shall be declared the winner and awarded one run.
 - 2. However, if the teams are equally seeded and have played each other in pool play, then that head-to-head result will break the tie, and the head-to-head winner shall be declared the winner and awarded one run.
 - 3. However, if the teams are equally seeded and did not play each other in pool play, then the teams' pool play winning percentage, followed by average runs allowed, followed by average runs scored, etc., will be used to determine a winner.
- viii. If, due to weather or other circumstances, games are changed from "complete the inning" to "complete the batter", this is the procedure to determine a game's final score.
 - 1. The home team can win with the runs they score in their half of the inning, but cannot lose or tie in their half of the inning if the home team

is ahead entering the final inning and the away team takes the lead or ties in their last at-bat, since the home team did not also get a full 3 outs in the same inning. In this case, the score reverts to the previous completed inning, and the home team wins by the score at the end of that inning.

2. If the away team is ahead entering the final inning and the home team ties the game when time expires, the game is a tie regardless of the number of outs played. Since the home team has already tied the game, it cannot revert to a previous inning where they would be the losers. In elimination play, one run is awarded to the higher seed to break a tie.
 3. If less than 1 inning has been played, then the game will be declared "no game," and no score for either team will be recorded.
- ix. If due to weather or other circumstances, a tournament cannot be completed in the scheduled days, the tournament director reserves the right to alter the format of the tournament.
1. A single elimination event can be reduced to just pool play if the elimination games cannot be played. The top two seeds from pool play are declared the champion and finalist.
 2. A single elimination event can be reduced from all teams advancing to elimination play to a subset of teams based on the local conditions.
 3. A double elimination event can be reduced to single elimination after pool play if local conditions make it impossible to complete double elimination.
 4. A double elimination event can be reduced to single elimination even if double elimination has already started, if local conditions make it impossible to complete double elimination. In this case, all teams in the losers' brackets would be done, and all games remaining in the winner's bracket are single elimination.
- x. Runs Ahead (Mercy) Rules are in effect for all games in the tournament, including the finals - (12 runs after 3 innings; 10 runs after 4 innings; 8 runs after 5 innings).
- xi. Choosing Home or Away Team
1. During pool play, a coin toss determines home and away. Note: if in pool play a division has multiple pools and the event is using the results of each pool for bracket placement (ie, A1 vs B4), it's possible for two teams to meet in elimination play with the same seed from their respective pools. In this case, a coin toss will determine home and away.
 2. The choice of a dugout is first-come, first-served.
 3. During single elimination, the higher-seeded team can choose home or away.
 4. During double elimination, the rules are slightly different.

5. In the losers' bracket elimination games, the higher-seeded team from pool play can choose home or away. If teams are equally seeded, then a coin toss will be used.
6. In the winners' bracket elimination games, the higher-seeded team can choose home or away. If teams are equally seeded, then a coin toss will be used with the following exceptions:
 - a. In the championship game, the winner of the winners' bracket (the team with no losses) can choose home or away.
 - b. In the case of an "if necessary" game, both teams are again equal with one loss, and a coin toss will determine home and away.

xii. Forfeits

1. The score for all forfeits will be recorded as 14-0.
2. If a team forfeits all its games in pool play, the team is NOT automatically the last seed. The team will have a 0-3 record, allowing 42 runs and scoring 0. If another team goes 0-3 and allows more than 42 runs, they would be a lower seed.

xiii. Line-Ups/Rosters - There are multiple options to use a line-up, and the line-up rules apply to all games, regardless if it's pool or bracket play.

1. Traditional line-up with or without substitutes, with the ability to also use a DP/Flex if desired (max hitting is 9).
2. Traditional line-up utilizing two APs with or without substitutes.
 - a. Up to two Additional Players (APs) can be used to increase the batting order to 10 or 11 batters.
 - b. The AP(s) will be placed in the batting order in the positions to be occupied.
 - c. The AP(s) can also be used on defense (only 9 defensive players in the field), but must keep the same position in the batting order.
 - d. The AP(s), if used, must be selected prior to the start of the game, and their name(s) must be included on the line-up card presented to the Umpire. Failure to declare the use of the AP(s) prior to the game precludes the use of the AP(s) in that game.
 - e. If a pinch-hitter or pinch-runner is used for an AP, that player becomes the new AP. The original AP(s) may re-enter like any other player under the re-entry rule. If an AP is used, the position must be used for the entire game.
 - f. If the AP plays defense for the Flex, the Flex leaves the game and counts as a substitution when she re-enters.
3. Roster Batting, also called continuous batting, where everyone in the lineup hits, is allowed in all games in the tournament. However, there are no substitutions. This means all players in the lineup will bat. APs and DP/Flex can still be used.
4. NOTE: Whichever lineup is used, it must be declared when lineups are

exchanged at the plate conference and remain in effect throughout the game.

xiv. Pitchers - Please be familiar with the pitching rules in the NFHS rule book.

1. Prior to starting inning #1... Five warm-up pitches. Three warm-up pitches every inning thereafter. The new pitcher gets five to start thereafter.
2. No sticky or tacky substances, such as pine tar or rock rosin, may be used as a substitute for a powdered drying agent, such as rosin bags, which are legal. Gorilla Gold grip-enhancer towels are legal.
3. A towel is legal for a pitcher to possess in either the rear pocket or tucked in the rear of the uniform pants, but if deemed distracting by the home plate umpire, the towel must be adjusted and made satisfactory to the home plate umpire's discretion.

xv. Courtesy Runners will be allowed for the catcher and pitcher at any time by a legal courtesy runner. If a team does not have a legal substitute remaining in their lineup, they can use the Last Completed At-Bat as a courtesy runner, subject to the same rules and restrictions as regular courtesy runners.

xvi. No warming up on the infield prior to games. Warmups must be beyond first or third base.

xvii. Fastpitch Nation Park utilizes Double First bases on all fields. Please be familiar with the double first base rule in the NFHS rule book.

c. Electronic Communications

- i. A team may utilize electronic one-way communication technology only while on defense and only for communication from the dugout to the catcher. Use is not permitted by the offense. The device must be worn as designed by the manufacturer. No two-way communication devices, such as cell phones, pagers, walkie-talkies, etc., are allowed to be worn or carried onto the playing field. The penalty for misuse of this technology is the removal of the technology from all players and coaches for the balance of the game. Any continued violation will result in the ejection of the manager from the game.
- d. Jewelry is allowed. However, jewelry that is judged by the umpire to be dangerous must be removed and may not be worn during the game.
- e. Illegal equipment shall be removed or made legal, and the umpire shall issue a team warning. With the next offense, the Manager shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game.
- f. Metal cleats are allowed for teams 13U and older.
- g. Towels are not allowed to hang out of pockets or be tucked into pants while batting.
- h. Bats - NFHS Softball recognizes and utilizes USA Softball's certification process. In order for a bat to be legal for use in NFHS and PlayFPN games, it must be marked with the ASA 2000, 2004, or the USA Softball All-Games Certification Mark. All bats that are approved by USA Softball, formerly ASA, for use in fastpitch play shall bear one of these markings. Additionally, any bat with one of these certification marks must not appear on the list of the USA Softball Non-Approved Bats with

Certification Marks.

- i. When the batter enters the batter's box with an altered or non-approved bat and the infraction is detected before the next legal or illegal pitch, they are called out. The batter and the manager are also ejected. All runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch, unless they were put out on the play.

5. Tournament pool play seeding and tie-breaker criteria:

- a. Total Number of Wins, followed by
- b. Winning Percentage, followed by
- c. Average Runs Allowed (total runs allowed / games played), followed by
- d. Average Runs Scored (total runs scored / games played), followed by
- e. Season Points that were earned prior to the event being played, followed by
- f. Date/time the team registered in the system for the season (Ascending).
- g. Head-to-head is used only in situations where only two teams are tied at any level in the tiebreaker chain. If more than 2 teams are tied in any criteria, then head-to-head is ignored.

Common Example:

- i. Teams A, B, and C are tied for the Total Number of Wins. No Head-to-Head is used, and the system moves to Winning Percentage.
- ii. Teams A, B, and C are still tied at Winning Percentage. No Head-to-Head is used, and the system moves to Average Runs Allowed.
- iii. Team C allowed an average of 2 runs. Teams A and B are tied, allowing an average of 3 runs. Team C is seeded ahead of teams A and B.
- iv. Since teams A and B are the only 2 teams remaining and are tied at Average Runs Allowed, Head-to-Head is looked at between those two teams only.
- v. If teams A and B never played each other, the system moves on to the next criterion in the tiebreaker chain, Average Runs Scored.
- vi. However, if teams A and B played each other, Head-to-Head is used, and the winner of the Head-to-Head game is advanced ahead of the loser of the Head-to-Head game in the final seedings.
- vii. Teams that move ahead via Head-to-Head are noted in the seeding table with an asterisk.
- viii. In the case of teams that play an unequal number of pool games due to a situation such as weather, the first criterion is important, as teams with a higher number of wins but an identical winning percentage will be placed ahead in the seedings.
- ix. In the case where a team plays an extra pool game above the norm, due to an uneven number of teams in 3-game pool play, their worst result is removed from the standings. The game will count for the opponent but not for the team that had its result removed. Head-to-head will be nullified for a team whose results were removed.

6. The Manager:

- a. is required at the plate conference (payment to the umpires is made at this time).

- b. is responsible for everyone on the team and in the dugout. Only coaches and rostered players are allowed inside dugouts and on the field. Defensive coaches are not allowed on the field of play when the ball is live during games. Defensive coaches must stay in the dugouts, and only the manager (not asst. coaches) is allowed to confer with umpires regarding rules or calls made on the field during the game.
- c. The Head Coach is legally responsible for all the team's equipment.
- d. The Head Coach is responsible for the coaching staff's attire. Proper attire is required for both decorum and safety. Coaches should wear normal athletic clothes. No open-toe shoes such as flip-flops or sandals. No overtly revealing shirts or shorts. No shirts or hats with vulgar, profane, or inappropriate language.
- e. The Head Coach is responsible for the spectators/parents associated with the team. It will be the manager's responsibility to control their team's spectators, which may include ejection from the area of the field or entirely from the park based on the circumstances.

7. Ejections -

- a. If a Manager, Asst. Coach, or Team Personnel, or someone other than a player, gets ejected from the game, they must leave the vicinity of that playing field immediately (out of earshot and eyeshot) and are prohibited from any further contact (direct, indirect, or electronically) with the team during the remainder of that game. Failure to leave or comply can result in the team forfeiting the game. Any ejection deemed extreme by the UIC and Tournament Director may warrant an additional game ejection. Any threat, both verbal or physical, made to an official, tournament staffer, other coach, player, or spectator will result in an ejection from the Tournament.
- b. If a player is ejected, the player will be restricted to the bench under the supervision of the manager. Any ejection deemed extreme by the UIC and Tournament Director may warrant an additional game ejection. Any threat, both verbal or physical, made to an official, tournament staffer, other coach, player, or spectator will result in an ejection from the Tournament and the possible involvement of law enforcement. It is the Tournament Director's discretion whether further penalties are warranted.
- c. If a parent/spectator is ejected, they must leave the vicinity of that playing field immediately (out of earshot and eyeshot) and are prohibited from any further contact (direct, indirect, or electronically) with the team during the remainder of that game. Failure to leave or comply can result in ejection for the rest of the day or the tournament. Any threat, both verbal or physical, made to an official, tournament staffer, other coach, player, or spectator will result in an ejection from the Tournament and the possible involvement of law enforcement. It is the Tournament Director's discretion whether further penalties are warranted.

8. Protests -

- a. Protests on any issue other than an umpire's judgment or player eligibility will be handled by the UIC, and/or Tournament Director. Their decision is FINAL.
- b. Any protest regarding umpire judgment is NOT allowed.

- c. Protests regarding rule or procedural interpretations must be made prior to the next pitch of the game and must be decided upon before the game can continue.
- d. Protests on rules or procedures that occur at the end of the game must be made before the next game begins.
- e. The protest committee will be made up of any of the following people:
 - i. Tournament Director
 - ii. Tournament UIC
 - iii. Any of the above designates

9. PlayFPN Roster Rules

- a. Teams can roster up to 20 players.
- b. Rosters are electronically locked at 8 am on the first day of play. They will remain locked through 11:59 pm on the last day of play.
- c. If, during an event, injuries force a team to have fewer than 9 players, the team can add players to the roster during an event ONLY to bring the roster up to a max of 9 players. However, coaches must alert the Tournament Director, as the roster will be locked to the coach during the event.
- d. A team can play with 8 players, but the 9th spot in the batting order is an out. If the 9th player arrives when the game is underway, she can be added to the 9th spot in the batting order.
- e. Illegal players are players playing in a game who do not appear on the team's PlayFPN roster. No other organization's roster is considered valid for this purpose. If a head coach feels an opposing team is using unrostered players, first confer with the opposing head coach, as most issues are clerical, such as wrong uniform number, etc. If conferring with the opposing coach does not solve the issue, the head coach can then escalate to the home plate umpire, which is now considered an official protest of player eligibility. No protest fee is required for this. The home plate umpire will then call for the UIC. Once the home plate umpire has been made aware, it is now in the hands of the UIC and the Tournament Director to investigate and adjudicate. If the protest is being made after the game is concluded, the head coach may only protest to the Tournament Director directly.
 - i. During Pool Play
 - 1. If the protest is made before the game is completed and is upheld, the offending player is disqualified for the remainder of the tournament, and the manager is ejected from the game and the following game. If the game is the last pool play game of the day, the ejection is served in the first bracket game the following day.
 - 2. If the protest is made after the game is completed and is upheld, the game shall stand as played. However, the offending player is disqualified from the remainder of the tournament, and the manager is ejected from the next two games to be played. If the game is the last pool play game of the day, the ejection is served in the first two bracket games the following day.
 - ii. During Bracket Play

1. If the protest is made before the game is completed and upheld, the offending player is disqualified for the remainder of the tournament, and the manager is ejected from the game and the following game.
 2. If the protest is upheld after the game is completed but during the tournament, the game shall stand as played. However, the offending player is disqualified from the remainder of the tournament, and the manager is ejected for the next two games.
 3. If the protest is unable to be resolved before the tournament completes, the process will be nullified, and no action will be taken.
- f. Players can be on more than one roster. However, a player cannot play for more than one team in a tournament, other than in exhibition games such as a college showcase. If a player is discovered to have played on more than one team in the same event, the player is disqualified from both teams for the remainder of the tournament.

10. Pay-at-the-Plate Umpires

- a. Payment is due by each team, in cash, at the home plate pre-game meeting.
- b. Teams pay for all games except the Finals in a tournament.
- c. A game will not start until the umpires are paid; however, the clock will start at the end of the pre-game meeting. The players will not take the field to play until payment is made.
- d. Any team that demonstrates an inability to pay or refuses to pay forfeits the game, and the manager is ejected for the remainder of the tournament. A second offense constitutes an immediate ejection of the team from the tournament.