

PlayFPN 2024 Tournament Rules at Fastpitch Nation Park 2/6/24

1. Current National Federation of High School (NFHS) Softball Rules and Regulations will apply to Fastpitch Nation 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. Games
 - a. All games will have time limits except the finals.
 - i. Pool 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. Pool games can end in a tie.
 - c. The international tiebreaker is used for Elimination games.
 - d. No new inning after 1:15. This is to discourage coaches from unsportsmanlike stalling to artificially extend a game.
 - ii. Elimination 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. No new inning after 1:15. This is to discourage coaches from unsportsmanlike stalling to artificially extend a game.
 - iii. Semi-final Games (single elimination only)
 1. The game length is 1:30 complete the inning, if necessary.
 - a. If the home team is ahead and batting when the time expires, the game is over.
 - b. No new inning after 1:25. This is to discourage coaches from unsportsmanlike stalling to artificially extend a game.
 - iv. Finals and Double Elimination "If Necessary" Games
 1. 7 Innings (6 Innings for 10U)
 - a. If the home team is ahead and batting at the end of regulation, the game is over.
 - v. Showcase games are 1:20, complete the batter.
 - vi. Pool and Bracket games of other lengths not stated, no new inning at 5 minutes less than the stated game length. This is to discourage coaches from unsportsmanlike stalling to artificially extend a game.
 - b. International Tie Breaker
 - i. Implemented in an Elimination game that ends in a tie after regulation.
 - ii. Implemented if a Final game ends in a tie after regulation.
 - c. Choosing Home or Away Team
 - i. 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.
 - ii. The choice of dugout is first come, first served.
 - iii. During single elimination, the higher-seeded team can choose home or away.
 - iv. During double elimination, the rules are slightly different.
 1. 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.
 2. 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.
 - d. 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 (3 innings or 2 ½ if the home team is ahead) are used or another means such as "complete the batter" to complete the game and determine a game's winner.
 - e. In single elimination of 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.
 - f. 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.

- i. In the case of the "if-necessary" game, the higher-seeded team from pool play shall be declared the winner and awarded one run.
 - ii. However, if the teams are equally seeded and 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.
 - iii. 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.
 - g. 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.
 - i. 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 back to the previous completed inning and the home team wins by the score at the end of that inning.
 - ii. 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 loser. In elimination play one run is awarded to the higher seed to break a tie.
 - iii. 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.
5. 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.
 - h. 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 criteria 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 a team that had its result removed. Head-to-head will be nullified for a team whose results were removed.
6. The game is in the control of the Umpires on the field.
7. Teams must be prepared to play 30 minutes prior to game time. If circumstances permit to start games early, the umpires will do so.
8. No warming up on the infield prior to games. Warmups must be beyond first or third base.
9. Fastpitch Nation Park utilizes Double First bases on all fields. Please be familiar with the double first base rules in the NFHS rule book.
10. The manager is required at the plate conference (payment to the umpires is made at this time).
11. The manager is legally responsible for all the team's equipment.
12. The manager is responsible for the team's spectators' actions.
 - a. Spectators/parents associated with a team are the responsibility of the Manager. It will be the manager's responsibility to control their team's spectators which may include ejection.
13. The clock begins immediately after the pre-game plate conference.
 - a. Game time is in the control of the umpires.
 - b. The clock is not stopped for any reason except in this circumstance:
 - i. 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 Tournament Director are the only people authorized to stop the clock.

- ii. Once the clock is officially stopped, time is never added back onto the clock unless authorized by the UIC or Tournament Director.
 - c. We ask that a volunteer from one of the teams operate the scoreboard controller.
- 14. Run Ahead (Mercy) Rules are in effect for all games in the tournament including the finals – (14 runs after 2 innings; 12 runs after 3 innings; 10 runs after 4 innings; 8 runs after 5 innings).
- 15. 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.
- 16. At the conclusion of the game, the Manager/Coach MUST verify and sign the scorecard with the game's final score. Once scores have been entered into the system, seedings are made and brackets set, there will be no going back to fix an incorrect score that the Manager/Coach signed for on the scorecard. Also, managers/coaches must verify online that their scores are correct on the website prior to leaving the park.
- 17. 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.
 - a. Penalty – Illegal equipment shall be removed or made legal. The umpire shall issue a team warning. The next offender and the Manager shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game.
- 18. Metal cleats are allowed for teams 13U and older.
- 19. Towels are not allowed to be hanging out of pockets or tucked into pants while batting.
- 20. 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, formally ASA, for use in fastpitch play shall bear one of the markings shown below. 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
 - a. USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List: <https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp>
 - b. 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 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.
- 21. Line-Ups/Rosters – There are multiple options to use a line-up.
 - a. Traditional line-up with or without substitutes.
 - b. Traditional line-up utilizing two APs with or without substitutes.
 - i. Up to two Additional Players (APs) can be used to increase the batting order to 10 or 11 batters. The AP(s) will be placed in the batting order in the positions to be occupied. 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. 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. 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 the entire game.
 - ii. APs may play defense for any player, that player is still in the lineup and bats.
 - iii. If the AP plays defense for the Flex, the Flex leaves the game and counts as a substitution when she re-enters.
 - c. Traditional line-up utilizing two APs with or without substitutes and utilizing the DP/Flex option (Max 11 Hitting).
 - d. Roster or continuous batting where everyone in the lineup hits is allowed in all games in the tournament. However, then there are No substitutions. This means all players in the lineup will bat. APs and DP/Flex can still be used.
 - e. NOTE: Whichever lineup is used, it must be declared when lineups are exchanged at the plate conference and remain in effect throughout the game.
- 22. Pitchers – Please be familiar with the pitching rules in the NFHS rule book.
 - a. Prior to starting inning #1... Five warm-up pitches. Three warm-up pitches every inning thereafter. The new pitcher gets five to start thereafter.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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.
 - d. Each field has unprotected bullpens. Pitchers can warm up down the first & third foul lines, throwing outward towards the outfield fence, and MUST have a spotter.
- 23. 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.
- 24. 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 (out of sight, out of mind) of that playing field immediately and be prohibited from any further contact (direct, indirect, or electronically) with the team during the remainder of that game. Failure to leave or comply will be a team forfeit. Any ejection deemed extreme by the UIC and Tournament Director may warrant an additional game ejection. Any threat made to an official will mean ejection from the Tournament and the involvement of law enforcement. It is the Tournament Director's discretion whether further penalties are warranted.

- b. If a player is ejected and a parent or legal guardian is present, the player and parent must leave the vicinity (out of sight, out of mind) of that playing field immediately and be prohibited from any further contact (direct, indirect, or electronically) with the team during the remainder of that game. If a parent or legal guardian is not present, the player will be restricted to the bench under the supervision of an adult. An ejected player will be able to play in the next game. Any ejection deemed extreme by the UIC and Tournament Director may warrant an additional game ejection. Any threat made to an official will mean ejection from the Tournament and the involvement of law enforcement. It is the Tournament Director's discretion whether further penalties are warranted.
- c. If a parent/spectator is ejected, they also must leave the vicinity (out of sight, out of mind) of that playing field. Ejection will be for one game only. Any ejection deemed extreme by the umpires may warrant an additional game ejection. Any ejection deemed extreme by the UIC and Tournament Director may warrant an additional game ejection. Any threat made to an official will mean ejection from the Tournament and the involvement of law enforcement. It is the Tournament Director's discretion whether further penalties are warranted.

25. Protests –

- a. Protests on any issue other than an umpire's judgment or player eligibility will require a \$100 cash fee. If a protest is upheld, the \$100 will be refunded. If a protest is denied, the fee will be forfeited.
- 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 part of the following people:
 - i. Tournament Director
 - ii. Site Director
 - iii. Tournament UIC
 - iv. Site UIC
 - v. Any of the above designates
 - vi. Player eligibility protests made during the game must be declared to the Plate Umpire who will confer with the UIC and Tournament Director. Player eligibility protests made after the game must be declared to the Tournament Director.
 - 1. Before making a player eligibility protest confer with the opposing coach and/or scorekeeper as most issues are clerical.
 - 2. During Pool Play
 - a. Protests on player eligibility must be made before pool play has concluded and bracket seedings have been established.
 - b. If the eligibility protest is upheld before the game is completed, the offending team forfeits the game in progress only and the player is ejected from the remainder of the tournament and the manager is ejected from the game.
 - c. If the eligibility protest is upheld after the game is completed the game shall stand as played. However, the offending player is ejected from the remainder of the tournament and the manager is ejected from the next game to be played.
 - 2. During Bracket Play
 - a. Protests on player eligibility must be made before the completion of the game. If a player eligibility protest cannot be resolved at the time of the protest, the game shall be completed.
 - b. If the eligibility protest is upheld before the game is completed, the offending team forfeits the game in progress.
 - c. If the eligibility protest is upheld after the game is completed but during the tournament, the game shall stand as played. However, the offending player is ejected from the remainder of the tournament and the manager is ejected for the next game.
 - d. If the eligibility protest is unable to be resolved before the tournament completes, the process will be nullified.

26. Roster Rules

- a. Roster Rules
- b. Teams can roster up to 20 players.
- c. Teams are free to add and remove players as they wish.
- d. Rosters are never locked or frozen to prevent removal or adding players.
- e. Players can be on more than one roster, hence a guest player process is not required. However, a player cannot play for more than one team in a tournament other than in exhibition games.
- f. The players on a team's roster prior to the scheduled start of a team's first game in an event, is their official roster for that event.
- g. Once a team has started its first game in a tournament, a player cannot be added to a team's roster unless injury forces the team to have fewer than 9 players. Then players can be added to the roster to bring the roster up to no more than 9 players.
- h. Players added to a roster (other than as described in 26g) after a team has started their first game would be considered illegal players and subject to the rules prescribed.

- i. 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.

27. Forfeits

- a. The score for all forfeits will be recorded as 14-0 (the same as a 2-inning run-ruled game).
- b. If a team forfeits all their 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.