

SOFTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS – 2016 SEASON

1. Softball has been defined as a spring sport. Therefore, the season will open the fourth Monday in March (March 21) and conclude the second Saturday in June (June 11).
2. A school must play a minimum of ten games with three different schools during the regular season to be considered for post season competition. Only the first three games with any opponent will count when figuring index, but all games will count as part of minimum requirement of ten games with three different schools. The maximum number of games is sixteen.

2015-2016 Softball Rule Changes (Check NFHS Softball Rules Book for all changes).

Rule 3-3-6: (F.P.) A team may use the DP/FLEX option provided it is made known prior to the start of the game.

- a. The DP's name is indicated on the lineup as one of the nine hitters in the batting order.
 - b. The name of player for whom the DP is batting (FLEX) will be placed in the 10th position in the lineup.
 - c. The DP must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game. A starter and any substitute for a starter may not be in the game at the same time.
 - d. The DP may be substituted for at any time by a legal substitution or the FLEX may play offense for the DP. In either case, the DP will leave the game. If replaced by a substitute, the DP position remains in the lineup. A starting DP may re-enter one time, provided the DP returns to the original position in the batting order.
 1. If replaced by the Flex, this reduces the number of players from ten (10) to nine (9). The game may legally end with nine (9) players.
 2. If the DP re-enters or a substitute enters as the DP and the FLEX was batting in the DP's spot, the FLEX can: a) return to the number 10 position and play defense, or b) leave the game if the DP plays defense for the FLEX
 - e. The DP may play defense at any position. Should the DP play defense for a player other than the FLEX, that player will continue to bat but not play defense, and is not considered to have left the game. The DP may play defense for the FLEX and the FLEX is considered to have left the game, reducing the number of players from ten to nine.
 - f. The FLEX may be substituted for at any time by a legal substitute or the DP may play defense for the FLEX. In either case, the FLEX will leave the game. If replaced by a substitute, the FLEX position remains in the lineup. The FLEX may re-enter the game one time provided she returns to the tenth position in the lineup.
 1. if replaced by the DP, this reduces the number of players from ten (10) to nine (9). The game may legally end with nine (9) players.
 2. If the FLEX re-enters or a substitute enters as the FLEX and the DP was playing defense in the FLEX player's spot, the DP can return to batting only, play defense for another players or leave the game if the FLEX plays offense for the DP.
 - g. Placing the FLEX into one of the first nine positions for someone other than the original DP is considered an illegal substitution. The illegal substitute shall be removed from the game and restricted to the dugout/bench. See Rule 2-57-2 for additional penalties.
- 1-6-1 The batters' helmet shall not have a mirror-like surface.
1-7-1 The catchers' helmet shall not have a mirror-like surface.

Note: Strike zone, DP Flex education and pitching are major points of emphasis this year. Please read the NFHS Rule Book for further explanation.

GENERAL RULES:

1. The official rules will be the current National Federation Fast Pitch Softball Rules with the following exceptions:
 - A. The V.P.A. Softball Committee has adopted the Federation rule that allows adult coaches in the coaching boxes, if they so desire. *Emphasis on coach's clothing

- (proper attire) See Rule 3, Sec. 5, Page 37. NOTE-**No bluejeans are allowed.**
- B. A varsity game will end after five innings, or thereafter, when a team is behind by 15 runs, and has completed its term at bat, or the home team is ahead. (See rule 4-2-3).
 - C. If a game is called prior to the completion of any full inning, after the fifth inning, the game becomes suspended game, provided the visiting team has scored one or more runs to tie the score or take the lead.
 - D. A regulation called game shall end in a tie, (if the score is tied) if the game has gone five complete Innings.
 - E. Any interrupted game, with under five completed innings will be treated as a suspended game according to Federation rules. Games will be picked up at the point of interruption.
 - F. If an interrupted game has not been played for five complete innings, the coach of the team losing may elect not to resume play at a later date and the existing score will be the official results.
 - G. By state adoption the optic yellow ball must be used, home teams' choice
 - H. By state adoption, a double first base may be used, home team's choice.
 - I. The Dudley optic yellow **ball with a poly core** will be used in all Tournament games, as well as a double first base.
 - J. An athlete who exhibits symptoms of a concussion is to be removed from the game and must be cleared by an appropriate licensed medical professional as designated by the home school before they may return.
 - K. For the 2016 season one defensive coach is allowed to be outside the dugout on the field of play. They must be in close proximity to the dugout at the discretion of the umpire.
2. The basic criteria for a suitable field are as follows: level, drained, clean baselines, back stop with no unusual dimensions, properly marked, standard dimensions.
 3. In the event a protest is upheld, umpire fees and expenses for replayed game shall be paid by the home team.
 4. ONLY UMPIRES certified by the Vermont High School Softball Association (VTSSUA) will be eligible to do varsity games. To become certified, umpires must attend the Federation Interpretation Clinic. To become certified umpires must satisfy the requirements of the VHSSUA. The requirements and the clinic dates are listed on the VHSSUA website at www.vtsoftballumps.com
 5. WRITTEN GROUND RULES WILL BE PRESENTED AT ALL GAMES TO COACHES AND UMPIRES.
 6. The line-up card must include the name of the replacement coach for each team and the first initial and last name of players.
 7.
 - a. The catcher's helmet and mask combination shall meet the NOCSAE standard.
 - b. The bats must be ASA approved with permanent ASA approved certification mark (2000 or 2004)
 8. Teams receiving three or more ejections in a season must meet with the Activities Standards Committee being allowed or to continue in the tournament.
 9. **All coaches must complete the NFHS Coaches Education and NFHS Concussion Education Program. (Concussion Education required before practice starts). First year coaches have one year to complete this requirement, but must complete the concussion education before your first practice. AED/CPR training will be required effective Fall 2016.**
 10. Sub-varsity games may be played with a time limit if mutually agreed upon by the teams prior to the beginning of the game.
 11. Regular season double headers must be 7 innings in length.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

1. The VPA softball committee will establish the playing dates for the tournament. To participate in the tournament a school must submit a completed application by electronically filing an application no later than 10:00 a m, May 29, 2016.
 - Last regular season scheduled game, May 28, 2016
 - Pairings – May 30, 2016
 - Play downs – May 31, 2016
 - Quarter-finals- June 3/4, 2016

Semi-finals – June 7/8, 2016

Conference Call With State Finalists, TBA

Finals - June 10th and 11th, 2016. At Poultney. Rain date, first available playing date.

2. Practice time on the infield will be limited to 20 minutes per team before game time.
3. Finals tournament site will be at the Poultney Recreation Field.
4. The total allowable number of personnel at tournament time will be 24. This will include players, coaches, scorers, etc.
5. The index will be found by using the point system on Page 1 of the Spring Tournament Season section.
6. All tournament games through the semi-finals will be played on the field of the higher seeded team. If the V.P.A. Softball Committee identifies a field as unsuitable, the seeding committee will approve a suitable field. The Committee has asked the umpires association for their input on field safety and suitability for tournament play.
7. Four officials will be assigned to each final, and paid by the VPA office.
8. The host school, or the one agreeing to host the playoff, will be responsible for crowd control and for paying the officials. The areas around the benches and the backstop are restricted, and spectators are not permitted in these areas.
9. All rotating trophies must be in the VPA office by the date of the pairings (June 1, 2013).
10. **All tournament games will be a minimum of seven innings; exceptions:**
 - a. **If the game is an interrupted game the coach of the team losing may elect not to resume play at a later date and the existing score will be the official results.**
 - b. **The 15-run rule is in effect in the playdowns. From the quarterfinals through the finals the 15-run rule is waived.**