



Ohio High School Athletic Association

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Softball Bulletin

Director of Officials Development – Softball

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- As we move to the start of the season this bulletin will provide some meeting updates and answers to the most frequently asked questions of the preseason. First a note on scrimmages – these can be played prior to the start of the “games” season or at any time of the year. A scrimmage is defined by OHSAA as a contest in which the rules of a sport are not required to be followed in all respects. Some examples of rules which could be altered by the schools in scrimmages include substitution and batting order exceptions (lineup cards may not be necessary), extra charged conferences and time outs for instructional purposes, and starting innings with runners on base to create situations for the offense and defense. Certainly, no safety rules can be altered. The length of the scrimmage is limited to a maximum of three hours per squad for grades 9-12 and two hours per squad for grades 7-8. This means that teams can scrimmage beyond seven innings and/or run situations within the scrimmage. This also means as officials, we can use this time to improve our own skills while working a scrimmage. If partners want to switch from plate to bases mid-scrimmage this is permissible. These scrimmages are also a great opportunity to bring a newer official along to get them some work. When working a scrimmage please check with the coaches and work with them to implement their plans to prepare their teams for the season.
- The deadline for completing state meeting attendance is this Friday, March 22. After this dates there is a \$50 late fee until April 13 at which time meeting credit is no longer available.
- Information concerning the first online local meeting was emailed to all officials earlier this week. Information is reprinted in italics below. Note the second online meeting will be available in mid/late April. An additional email will be sent announcing that meeting. It is not necessary to call or email asking when meetings will be available.

*These are optional meetings for officials to view and each meeting can be completed for **one local meeting credit each**. Your attendance credit is not uploaded automatically upon completion like the online state rules meeting.*

The meeting will only be available on the timeline below. Your attendance will be uploaded on the timeline below:

Meeting Available	Last Date Available	Credit Upload
<i>Monday, March 25th</i>	<i>Friday, April 5th</i>	<i>Friday, April 12th</i>

To access the online local meetings for your sport:

1 - Log in to your myOHSAA profile - <https://officials.myohsaa.org/Logon>

2 - Select the orange "Official" icon

3 - On the left-side menu toward the bottom select the button labeled "Special Presentations" under the orange section header labeled "OHSAA Resources"





4 - Once on the Special Presentations screen, select the meeting for your sport by selecting the "View" button for your sport's meeting.

5 - After the "Last Date Available" listed above, the meeting will not be available for viewing or local meeting credit.

- Probably the most frequently asked question this year has had to do with a baseball rule that allows electronic communication from the coach to the catcher. **THIS IS NOT PERMITTED UNDER NFHS SOFTBALL RULES.** It has been several years since my term on the Softball Rules Committee ended but it is my understanding that there was no proposal submitted by any state requesting a change. This was discussed in the state meeting for both coaches and umpires. If this occurs it is penalized in accordance with Rule 3-6-1. If this is the first equipment violation for that team the umpire will issue a team warning to the coach. If it is the second (or more) equipment violation of the game the offender and the head coach are restricted to the dugout for the balance of the game. If the offense involves electronic communication both the sender and receiver of the communication are considered to be offenders.
- Another rule that some are confusing with the baseball rule has to do with batting helmets. In baseball a helmet with a "C Flap" is legal for batters and runners. Note that baseball helmets are not required to have a face protector while NFHS Softball Rule 1-6-6 requires fast pitch batting helmets to be equipped with a NOCSAE approved face protector. The C Flap is not a NOCSAE approved face protector. Unfortunately we have received reports that some retailers are selling the C Flap helmets on shelves marked for softball equipment. This error is regrettable but does not make the equipment legal.
- We will no doubt be playing some early season games in cold weather. Note that OHSAA has adopted the Rule 3-2-1 exception to allow players to wear coats, sweatshirts, etc. when necessary. These items do not need to conform to the school uniform colors or have the same uniform numbers as the player's jersey number.
- Softballs do not need to have the OHSAA logo. Softballs must conform to Rule 1-3. Each ball must contain the NFHS Authenticating Mark found on page 13 of the 2024 Rule Book – Figure 1-

4 (Rule 1-3-8). A complete listing of the roughly 40 approved models from about 15 manufacturers can be found at - <https://tools.nfhs.org/AuthenticatingMark/>

- Some players are using sliding mitts or pads and carrying these in the back pocket. Umpires should instruct batters that these must be tucked inside the pocket (or removed). Under Rule 8-1-2b the batter is awarded first base (subject to some exceptions) when a pitched ball strikes the batter or her clothing. This includes her equipment such as a helmet or sliding mitt. Likewise if a runner is tagged on such equipment that is considered a tag.
- **PLAY SITUATION** - Team A's coach points out that Team B's batting helmets have the older NOCSAE stamp and do not have the current stamp shown in Figure 1-8. **RULING:** Figures 1-8 and 1-9 (pages 16 and 17 of the NFHS Rule Book) were updated to reflect the current NOCSAE stamp. The only change in this new stamp is the wording above the boxed area of the stamp. As long as the helmet has the correct helmet drawing (batting helmet shown in Figure 1-8 and catcher's helmet shown in 1-9) and the words "Meets NOCSAE Standard" inside the boxed area of the stamp they are allowed to be used. In addition, they must comply with the other requirements for helmets listed in Rule 1-6 for batting helmets and Rule 1-7 for catcher's helmets.

<p>Manufacturer Certifies</p> 	<p>SEI Certified</p> 	<p>Manufacturer Certifies</p> 	<p>SEI Certified</p> 
Previous Figure 1-8	Current Figure 1-8	Previous Figure 1-9	Current Figure 1-9