



Ohio High School Athletic Association

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Softball Bulletin 21-3

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- After no season in 2020 the weather for most of Ohio was great for the opening of the 2021 season. Let's hope that continues. We are going to pivot away from Covid issues and modifications in this edition however if you need to review or otherwise access the discussion from the last bulletin note that it can be found at this link - <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Officiating/dod/Softball/2021OHSAA-SB-Bulletin2.pdf>
- Also note that all past bulletins, dating back to 2017, can be found here - <https://www.ohsaa.org/Officiating/DOD>
- Reminder - the Rules Test for 2021 has been delayed due to technical issues in our office. We will update everyone as soon as we know more. We believe it will still add value as our umpires work through this season.
- Our fourth local meeting was issued this week. Note that the local meeting schedule is flexible and there may not be a meeting every week. All meetings will be announced through the Columbus office. If you don't receive credit for one of these meetings don't contact the office or me. You will not be penalized – however they are informational and important. To get these -

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.

- As promised we will spend some time answering some equipment issue questions in this edition. First, let's review softballs – all requirements are found in Rule 3-3 of the NFHS rules. Here are answers to questions that arose during scrimmages and were received, mostly from school administrators, this week -

1. Color – Balls must be optic yellow.
 2. Size – We use 12” softballs.
 3. Other Specifications - are found in Table 1-1 on Page 11 of the rulebook. We don't expect umpires to measure COR, Compression, Dynamic Stiffness, weight, or circumference. Balls must carry the NFHS Authenticating Mark shown in Figure 1-4 on page 11 of the rulebook. We then know that somewhere our staff of talented assistants approved the ball as meeting these specifications as well as the other manufacturing requirements listed in Rule 3-3.
 4. There is NO requirement that the OHSAA logo appear on the ball.
 5. There is no requirement that the NOCSAE approval appear on the ball. In fact, NOCSAE has not developed a standard for softballs.
- Before we move on to talk about bats, let's discuss bat sensors. A bat sensor is an item attached near the bat knob to measure swing speed. Although a player could use this in practice, these items are considered non-traditional equipment and are not permitted in NFHS play (Rule 1-8-1). The use of a bat sensor is a violation of Rule 3-6-1. When discovered the item must be removed from the game, the umpire will issue a team warning, and the next violation of Rule 3-6-1 by that team will result in the offender and the head coach being restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game.
 - Don't confuse bat sensors with the grip attachments used to reduce the sting to the batter's hands when hitting the ball. These are permitted (Rule 1-5-2a).
 - In the 2019 season our biggest item for questions, whether from umpires or coaches, concerned bats. As a result, these were a point of emphasis for 2020 and 2021 both at the NFHS and OHSAA levels. In the interest of a consistent message here is what we said in the 2020 White Book and covered in the state meetings for both 2020 and 2021.

Bats – Definitions and Penalties – Rules 1-5-1, 2-4, & 7-4-2

- An illegal bat does not meet the specifications of Rule 1-5. Altered bats and non-approved bats are both types of illegal bats. There are other types of illegal bats – a bat without a sufficient safety grip or a bat that has pine tar on the barrel are just two examples. A batter who enters the box with an illegal bat or is discovered having used an illegal bat with the infraction being detected by the umpire or the defense prior to the next pitch is out. The ball is immediately dead and all runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If a runner was retired on the play the out stands and the runner does not return.
- An altered bat was once legal but has been structurally changed by rolling, shaving, warming, or some other intentional act. When an altered bat is used all penalties for an illegal bat apply PLUS the batter and head coach are also ejected from the game.
- A non-approved bat is one that does not meet USA Softball (formerly ASA) specifications OR has been placed on USA Softball list of non approved bats with the USA Softball certification mark. When a non-approved bat is used all penalties for an illegal bat apply PLUS the batter and head coach are also ejected from the game (same penalty as for an altered bat).
- When a penalty includes ejection of the batter and head coach (altered or non-approved bat) the umpire is required to complete the online ejection report to inform the OHSAA and the

school administration which is responsible for enforcing the additional penalties that apply when an ejection occurs.

- For 2020 a new definition has been added for a damaged bat. This item is defined as a bat that was once legal but is now broken, cracked, dented, rattles, or has sharp edges that could cut the ball. Note that a bat that has developed instability in the handle or taper (often called a wobble) is considered a damaged bat. Damaged bats are not considered illegal and when discovered are immediately removed from the game without penalty.
- It is important to know what Certification Marks are required for NFHS softball competition. Rule 1-5-1d and Figure 1-6 have now been updated to include USA Softball's newest certification mark shown which are also provided below – there are now three marks which are the only approved marks for bats used in high school play:



NFHS rules require that bats meet the USA Softball bat performance standards. Thus, bats that only bear approval marks from other softball organizations without one of the above certification marks do not meet the requirements for use in high school play. Note that USA Softball also publishes a listing of Non-Approved Bats with Certification Marks. This was created to provide a listing of bats that had once been approved for use but are no longer deemed approved for use. This listing can be found on the USA Softball website at this link - <https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp>

Here is an excerpt from the 2020 NFHS Softball Points of Emphasis –

Bat manufacturers produce several models of bats for multiple organizations. These different models are often custom designed to meet the specific organizations' individual certification requirements. Bats that are custom designed for one organization may only bear that organization's certification mark. Conversely, a large number of these bats are designed to meet several organizations' requirements and will bear multiple organizations certifications marks – making them legal to use in multiple codes. What is important to know is that NFHS softball recognizes and utilizes USA Softball's certification process. In order for a bat to be legal for use in NFHS softball it must be marked with the ASA 2000, 2004 or the USA Softball All-Games Certification Mark. 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. This list was created as a way to alert players and coaches that a bat that was once approved for use has now been deemed no longer approved for use. All bats that are approved by USA Softball, formally ASA, for use in fast pitch play shall bear one of the markings shown below. Once these bats have entered the market and possible issues arise, there is a process for revoking the approval of these bats. When it has been determined that

a bat should have its approval revoked, either through the re-testing process or for a voluntary removal from the manufacturer, the bat is added to the Non-Approved Bats list with Certification Marks. These bats were approved when originally manufactured and were legal for play at that time, but due to some unforeseen issues no longer pass the approval requirements.

- To further simplify this, if a bat does not contain one of these three marks -



OR

It appears on the list of Non-Approved Bats list with Certification Marks found at (even if it has one of the marks listed above) - <https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp>

The result is a non-approved bat. When a non-approved bat is used all penalties for an illegal bat apply PLUS the batter and head coach are also ejected from the game (same penalty as for an altered bat). Rule 3-6-1 and Rule 7-4-2 both apply.

- Nothing in the discussion of these non-approved bats represents a new rule – this is a POE because of problems we had in 2019 and before. The only rule changes for 2020 in this area concerned the definition of a damaged bat and the addition of a third certification mark.