

## 2024 FASTPITCH SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS

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**NOTE:** The following regulations apply to all levels of tournament competition unless otherwise specified. They were adopted by the Ohio High School Athletic Association Board of Directors in February of 2024. The Executive Director is authorized to modify these regulations when deemed necessary, subject to ratification by the Board of Directors.

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### REGULATIONS FOR SECTIONAL, DISTRICT, REGIONAL AND STATE TOURNAMENTS

#### I. ORGANIZATION OF TOURNAMENTS

- A. Each District Athletic Board (DAB) organizes and conducts sectional and district Tournaments in their respective districts, subject to the rules and regulations adopted by the Board of Directors. Sectional / District site managers will receive supplemental information from respective District Athletic Boards. Site selection and play dates of Sectional/District tournaments are at the discretion of each District Athletic Board.
- B. The Regional and State Tournaments are under the direct control of the Executive Director's office. There will be four divisions (I, II, III, and IV). Site selection for Regional Tournaments is at the discretion of the Executive Director's office and may be changed at any time.
- C. There is no restriction/requirement at any level of play regarding playing at college or high school sites. Sites must meet minimum requirements of the NFHS.
- D. The OHSAA maintains the authority to change the site, date, or time of any Regional and State tournament assignment.
- E. Completion of the OHSAA Tournament Entry Form is the school's agreement to play at the site, day and time assigned by the Executive Director's office.

#### II. ELIGIBILITY OF STUDENTS, COACHES AND BENCH PERSONNEL

- A. All participants must be eligible under the Bylaws and Sports Regulations of the Ohio High School Athletic Association. Only one school team sponsored by a member school is eligible to participate.
- B. Twenty-two (22) players may be in uniform for each tournament game. The twenty-two (22) players will be the only players permitted in the dugout or on the field for warm-up or any part of the contest. The twenty-two (22) may be changed from game to game throughout the tournament, however any player in uniform must meet all eligibility requirements established by OHSAA Bylaws. Only the 22 permitted in uniform are permitted to warm-up on the field during pre-game.
- C. A student who uses anabolic steroids or other performance enhancing drugs is ineligible for interscholastic competition until such time as medical evidence can be presented that the student's system is free of anabolic steroids or other performance enhancing drugs.
- D. Only Board of Education approved coaches with valid Pupil Activity Permits issued by the Ohio Department of Education are permitted to be in the bench area or locker room prior to, during, and after any tournament contest.

#### III. GENERAL REGULATIONS

##### A. TOURNAMENT ENTRY/WITHDRAW

Member schools wanting to participate in the OHSAA Softball Tournament must indicate their

intent to participate on the Tournament Entry form. Schools that change their tournament participation after **April 15, 2024**, will be subject to a \$50 penalty per sport.

**B. GAMES PER DAY**

No team or individual shall play more than two tournament games per day.

**C. FAILURE TO APPEAR**

If national playing rules do not address failure to appear, the following regulations will apply. If a team fails to appear or is not ready to play within 30 minutes of the scheduled starting time of the tournament game, the space on the bracket may be declared vacant. A “forfeit” shall be declared, and the opposing team shall advance to the next round of competition. See Failure to Appear under Section 16.4 of the General Sports Regulations. All decisions relative to this regulation shall be made by a member of the respective district athletic board or the OHSAA Executive Director’s office.

The OHSAA Executive Director’s Office, in collaboration with the administrative staff, District Athletic Boards and/or Board of Directors, and the tournament manager, may delay or reschedule a tournament contest/competition provided it is practical to delay or reschedule such contests/competitions.

**D. SECTIONAL AND DISTRICT TOURNAMENT DATES**

The Sectional Tournaments may begin on Saturday, **May 4** and scheduled to be completed by **May 11**. The District Tournaments will be conducted during the following week, ending **May 18**. Sectional and District tournament managers should build in make-up dates knowing the Regional will NOT be pushed back due to postponements at the Sectional/District level.

**E. SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE**

No team or individual entry will be allowed to compete in the Sectional, District, Regional or State Tournaments unless accompanied by a coach or person authorized by the Board of Education. Teams unaccompanied by a coach or authorized person will be disqualified.

**F. UMPIRES**

- a. Only OHSAA Class 1 officials shall be used in Sectional, District, Regional and State Tournament games.
- b. Officials for Sectional and District Tournaments shall be selected as directed by the respective District Boards.
- c. The officials for the Regional and State Tournaments shall be assigned by the Executive Director’s office according to the procedure adopted by the Board of Directors in proportion to the number of Class 1 officials in the district.
- d. All OHSAA licensed tournament officials shall possess either a current Department of Education issue Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit or show evidence of completing an approved concussion education course.

**G. REPRESENTATION TO REGIONAL TOURNAMENTS**

The number of representatives from each of the six Athletic Districts is determined by a formula. The representation from each District to the Regional in Divisions I, II, III, and IV for 2024 shall be:

District	I	II	III	IV
Central	4	2	2	1
East	0	1	1	1
Northeast	6	5	4	3
Northwest	2	3	3	6
Southeast	0	2	3	2
Southwest	4	3	3	3
<b>Totals</b>	16	16	16	16

**H. TOURNAMENT SEEDING AND DRAWING PROCEDURES**

**NOTE: The established date for all seeding and drawing meetings is April 28, 2024. The meeting is to be held at 2:00p.m.**

a. Posting and Recording Team Records

Tournament managers will post the records of all teams in their tournament. It is the responsibility of each school to have its records compiled as shown below and given to the tournament manager prior to the start of seed voting. The records will include the number of wins and losses in the divisions of the teams played.

For Example: A Division I team with 22 games played at the time of the draw:

Division I opponents: 14 wins 3 losses

Division II opponents: 4 wins 1 loss

\*All games played shall be recorded

b. Voting Procedures for seeding teams

All head coaches shall vote via online ballot which **shall be made public online**, selecting their choice for #1 seeded team. The team with the greatest number of votes shall be seeded #1, second highest #2, until all teams are seeded.

Policy for Breaking Ties in the Tournament Seeding Process

1.) The team that receives the most individual votes at the tied position or above shall receive the higher seed.

2.) If the results are still tied, the tie shall be broken by a coin toss. The school that calls the toss shall be the first one to appear in the alphabet (official school name without the respective city name ahead of it unless the city name is part of the official school name), going from A to Z in even-numbered years and Z to A in odd-numbered years.

**NOTE:** If electronic balloting is utilized in a particular District, the results shall be sent to the manager and made public by the manager at the drawing meeting.

c. Placement of Teams on Brackets

Each District Athletic Board (DAB) shall determine placement of teams on brackets. Regulations for placement for each district can be found by navigating to the following websites:

Central District Athletic Board: [www.ohsaa.org/cdab](http://www.ohsaa.org/cdab)  
East District Athletic Board: [www.ohsaa.org/edab](http://www.ohsaa.org/edab)  
Northeast District Athletic Board: [www.ohsaa.org/nedab](http://www.ohsaa.org/nedab)  
Northwest District Athletic Board: [www.ohsaa.org/nwdab](http://www.ohsaa.org/nwdab)  
Southeast District Athletic Board: [www.ohsaa.org/sedab](http://www.ohsaa.org/sedab)  
Southwest District Athletic Board: [www.ohsaa.org/swdab](http://www.ohsaa.org/swdab)

If a school fails to have a representative present at the seeding and drawing meeting, the manager shall place the school(s) on the bracket in accordance with the DAB's seeding protocol.

The tournament manager will distribute brackets to representatives of participating teams. All brackets shall designate date and time of game with the home team being listed on the top of the bracket. Brackets which include a 'bye' will have that 'bye' drawn on a bracket to represent it as a "Home" team.

#### I. **GAME RULES**

The National Federation Softball Rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) will be the Official Rules in all tournament games. In situations where the OHSAA has not adopted NFHS rules (e.g. tie breaker), OHSAA rules shall prevail. All game rules must be followed explicitly by coaches, schools and officials.

- A. All tournament games shall be played to completion. Suspended games shall be resumed from the point of suspension.
- B. Examples of games played to completion include:
  - a. Any time after five innings, or after 4½ innings when a team is 10 or more runs behind and has completed its term at bat. This is a completed game.
  - b. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the plate umpire, any remaining play may be shortened at any time or the game terminated. (See NFHS Rule 4.2.3 which is the same protocol for the regular season).
- C. If a team fails to appear or is not ready to play within 30 minutes of the scheduled starting time of a tournament game, the space on the bracket may be declared vacant. A forfeit will be declared, and the opposing team shall advance to the next round of competition.
- D. Bylaw 8-3-1. The OHSAA Constitution and Bylaws does NOT permit Protested Games. INTERPRETATION: In the event a rule is misinterpreted or misapplied, the correction must be made by the umpires and coaches on the field at the time it occurs. Umpires and coaches are urged to carry rule books, to confer using rule books and to make a correction where warranted. If the coaches and umpires cannot agree, the final decision will be made by the umpire-in-chief.

#### J. **TOURNAMENT BALL**

The optic yellow Rawlings C12RYL-OH softball, the adopted softball of the OHSAA, will be used for all tournament games.

#### K. **BATTING PRACTICE**

As determined by the host site manager and if available, batting practices will only be held in the batting cages at a schedule to be announced.

**L. COACHES ATTIRE**

Coaches shall be attired in a school uniform or jersey/coaching shirt with slacks, shorts or other leg coverings in school colors or colors of khaki, black, white or gray. Cut-offs or any type of jeans are prohibited. Jackets are not considered part of the coach's uniform. A coach not dressed in appropriate attire shall not be permitted in the field of play following the pregame conference for the duration of the game or until the situation has been remedied.

**M. PLAYING FIELD**

There is no restriction that tournament games be played on a skinned infield. Turf fields are permissible. If teams are competing on a turf field, players must adhere to the venue policy regarding the use of metal cleats. The pitching distance for high school fast pitch is 43 feet. Fields must meet minimum requirements of the NFHS.

**N. AWARDS** - Only awards furnished by the OHSAA may be presented at the OHSAA tournament site.

- (a) SECTIONAL Tournaments: Trophies will **not** be awarded.
- (b) DISTRICT Tournaments – Team trophies will be presented to the district winner and runner-up teams; awards will be presented to the individual members of the teams and coaches.
- (c) REGIONAL Tournaments– A trophy will be presented to the regional winner and runner-up teams.
- (d) STATE Tournament – Team trophies will be presented to the State Championship and Runner-up teams. Individual members of both teams will be presented with gold or silver awards.

**O. ADMISSION**

Ticket prices are as follows. Children age 5 and under will not be charged admission. Tickets will be handled by the OHSAA's online partner, HomeTown Ticketing, and procedures will be shared with the participating schools. Eight (8) complimentary administrative tickets will be available for each participating school.

Sect. Student	Sect. Adult	Dist. Student	Dist. Adult	Reg. Student	Reg. Adult	State Semi Student	State Semi Adult	State Final-Student	State Final Adult
\$5.00	\$8.00	\$5.00	\$8.00	\$5.00	\$12.00	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$10.00	\$15.00

**P. BENCH LIST – TEAM AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Twenty-two players, plus six others (28 total) will be admitted at the pass gate by the Official OHSAA Bench List/Travel Party certified by the principal of the high school. This bench list will be used at the pass gate for all sessions of the tournament. The Official Bench List/Travel Party will include space for admission for the bus driver (shall not be in the dugout or bench area).

**Q. MEDIA**

Credentials for sectional, district and regional contests may be obtained by contacting the tournament manager, including telecasting/broadcasting/streaming. All media arrangements are to be made prior to the game. Sectional, district and regional tournament managers should review requests for live

telecasting/video streaming with the Executive Director's office. Contact Tim Stried, Communications Department, at [tstried@ohsaa.org](mailto:tstried@ohsaa.org). All requests for credentials for the state tournament should also be made with Tim. Note that the OHSAA prohibits live television or video streaming of tournament contests unless prior permission has been obtained.

**R. FILMING OF CONTESTS**

**a. Videotaping or filming by participating schools**

1. Filming or videotaping of softball tournament games by one or both the schools playing the game is permitted provided the permission of the tournament manager is secured, it is done at the expense of the school involved and a maximum of one individual per school is permitted to videotape.
2. Filming or videotaping by members of the coaching staff can now be done from inside the dugout and the video may be viewed, within the dugout, during the game for coaching purposes.
3. Filming or videotaping of a potential opponent's tournament game is prohibited.

**b. Videotaping or filming by spectators**

1. Shall be for personal use.
2. Shall not be used for the purpose of scouting or coaching.
3. Shall not interfere with the view of the athletic contest by other spectators.
4. The tournament site shall not permit the use of more than the seating space for which the spectator has paid when seating is needed for paid fans.
5. The tournament site accepts no liability for damage or theft of spectator equipment or injury as a result of privately owned equipment.
6. Equipment will not be permitted in any playing area – only in the spectator seating area.
7. The tournament site will not provide sources of power for video equipment.
8. Violation of this regulation may result in the removal of offender from the premises.

**S. UNSPORTING CONDUCT PENALTY**

- a. During participation in OHSAA tournaments, any student or coach ejected for unsporting conduct shall be ineligible for the remainder of that day as well as for all contests at all levels in that sport until two regular season/tournament contests are played at the same level as the ejection.
- b. Any player or coach ejected for fighting shall be ineligible for all contests for the remainder of that day. In addition, the player or coach shall be ineligible for all contests at all levels in that sport until FOUR regular season/tournament contests are played at the same level as the ejection or disqualification.
- c. Individuals ejected for unsporting conduct shall be reported to the OHSAA Executive Director by the tournament manager. The Executive Director will investigate the situation and may impose additional penalties in accordance with Bylaw 11 if the situation warrants it.
- d. Participation in an athletic contest is a privilege. Everyone is expected to conduct himself or herself in an exemplary manner while participating.

**T. PROPERTY DAMAGE**

There is no insurance covering property damage. If property is damaged at a tournament site by competing school teams, student body or spectators, the school from which the students and/or spectators come shall be liable and pay the cost of repair or replacement. The tournament manager is

authorized to deduct from the school's share the cost of any damages caused by competing schools. Other damages to facilities not attributed to a competing school could be a legitimate tournament expense and may be deducted from tournament receipts. If damage is extensive, the District Board or Board of Directors will become involved. Student crowd control at state sponsored tournaments is the responsibility of the administrative heads of the competing schools.

**U. SPONSORSHIP AND RIGHTS**

The Ohio High School Athletic Association is the sponsoring association for the sectional, district, regional and state softball tournaments. The OHSAA reserves all rights regarding the management of these tournaments and the sale of any items or any audio-visual reproductions. Any sale of food, clothing, souvenirs or any other items is strictly prohibited without permission of the respective District Athletic Boards for sectional and district Tournaments and the OHSAA Executive Director for the regional and state Tournaments.

**V. PROHIBITED ITEMS**

There shall be no advertising through printed media, billboards, radio or television that includes beer, wine, liquor, tobacco, political parties or candidates or any other advertising contrary to the philosophy of the high school athletic program.

There also shall be no raffles or any type of games of chance permitted at the site of tournament contests during the duration of the tournament(s).

In addition, the sale of, the distribution of, or the consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs is not permitted at the site of any contest involving OHSAA member schools.

**W. DRONES – UNMANNED AREAL VEHICLES**

The use of drones is prohibited for any purpose by any persons at OHSAA tournament contests. Tournament managements shall remove anyone attempting to use a drone and/or confiscate the drone until the event has been completed.

**Note:** An exception to this policy may be made in specific cases for OHSAA broadcast partners, provided the management of the tournament facility permits the presence of drones for broadcast purposes under the control of the OHSAA.

**X. LIGHTNING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER**

This is an extremely important safety policy adopted by the National Federation. Though all officials received these procedures in pre-season communication, it is strongly recommended that tournament site managers review this policy with Administrators of competing schools, coaches AND Officials prior to games. The Lightning and Inclement Weather Policy is relative to ALL OHSAA Sports and is contained within the **OHSAA Sports Regulations**.

**Recognition:**

*Coaches, athletic trainers, athletes, administrators, and contest officials should be educated regarding the signs indicating thunderstorm development. Since the average distance between successive lightning flashes is approximately two to three miles ANYTIME that lightning can be seen or heard, the risk is already present. Weather can be monitored using the following methods:*

**Monitor Weather Patterns** – Be aware of potential thunderstorms by monitoring local weather forecasts the day before and morning of the competition, and by scanning the sky for signs of potential thunderstorm activity.

**National Weather Service** – Weather can also be monitored using small, portable weather radios from the NWS. The NWS uses a system of severe storm watches and warnings watch indicates conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning indicates severe weather has been reported in an area, and everyone should take proper precautions. Any thunderstorm poses a risk of injury or death even if it does not meet the criteria for severe weather. Therefore, anytime thunderstorms are in the forecast (even if it is only a 20 percent chance), event organizers should be at a heightened level of awareness to the potential danger of lightning.

**Management:**

**Evacuation-** If lightning is imminent or a thunderstorm is approaching, all personnel, athletes and spectators shall evacuate to available safe structures or shelters. A list of the closest safe structures should be announced and displayed on placards at all athletic venues.

**Thirty-minute rule-** Competition or practice shall be suspended once lightning has been recognized or thunder is heard. It is required to wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard prior to resuming practice or competition. Given the average rates of thunderstorm travel, the storm should move 10-12 miles away from the area. This significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes. **Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count shall reset the clock, and another count shall begin.**

**\*NOTE:** At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.

Y. **CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT**

Ohio law effective April 26, 2013, indicates that if a student is removed from practice or competition due to a suspected concussion or head injury, the coach or contest official who removes the student shall not permit the student, ON THE SAME DAY THE STUDENT IS REMOVED, to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach or contest official is responsible. Thereafter, which means no earlier than the next day, the coach or contest official shall not permit the student to return to practice or competition until both of the following conditions are satisfied.

- 1) The student's condition is assessed by either of the following:
  - a. A physician, who is a person authorized under the Chapter 4731 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine or surgery (MD or DO).
  - b. Any other licensed health care provider that the school district board of education or other governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered public school, authorizes to assess the student who has been removed from practice or competition.
- 2) The student received written authorization that it is safe for the student to return to practice or competition from a physician or other licensed health care provider authorized to grant the clearance.

A school district board of education or governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school may authorize a licensed health care provider who is NOT a PHYSICIAN to make an assessment and grant authorization for a student to return to participation ONLY if the provider is acting in accordance with one of the following as applicable to the provider's authority to practice in Ohio:

- 1) In consultation with a physician
- 2) Pursuant to the referral of a physician

- 3) In collaboration with a physician
- 4) Under the supervision of a physician

Note: A physician or other licensed health care provider who makes an assessment or grants clearance for a student to return to participation may be a volunteer.

### **REFERENCE INFORMATION**

The safety of our student-athletes is always of utmost concern. Information regarding the following important topics can be found at [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org) and at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org) :

- Heat Stress and Athletic Participation
- Recommendations for Hydration to Prevent Heat Illness
- Suggested Guidelines for Management of Head Trauma in Sports
- Communicable Disease Procedures (can also be found in the back of the NFHS Rules Book)
- Links to the following sites:
  - Joint Advisory Committee on Sports Medicine
  - Ohio Athletic Trainers Association
  - American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
  - Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth
  - National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA)

### **2024 GIRLS REGIONAL FASTPITCH SOFTBALL TOURNAMENTS** **May 22 and May 24 or May 25, 2024**

#### **I. REGULATIONS**

The applicable regulations for sectional and district softball tournaments shall apply to the regional tournaments in addition to any listed below.

#### **II. BATTING/INFIELD PRACTICE SCHEDULES**

As determined by the host site manager and if available, batting practices will only be held in the batting cages at a schedule to be announced. Here is a sample schedule for infield practices at regional contests:

<b>2:00 Game</b>		<b>5:00 Game</b>
1:30-1:40	Home team infield practice	4:30-4:40
1:40-1:50	Visiting team infield practice	4:40-4:50
1:50-1:55	Umpire/coach pregame conference at home plate	4:50-4:55
1:55-2:00	Player introductions (non-starters followed by starters) and National Anthem	4:55-5:00
2:01	First pitch	5:01

#### **III. POSTPONED OR SUSPENDED GAME**

If games are postponed or suspended, they will be rescheduled in the original order. If the first round games are not completed on Wednesday, they will be played on Thursday or the next playable day, with the finals on Saturday. If the semifinals are played on Saturday, the final may be played on Sunday.

#### **IV. MEDIA**

Credentials may be obtained by contacting the tournament manager, including telecasting/broadcasting/streaming. All media arrangements are to be made prior to the game.

Regional tournament managers should review requests for live telecasting/video streaming with the Executive Director's office. Contact Tim Stried, OHSAA Communications Department, at [tstried@ohsaa.org](mailto:tstried@ohsaa.org). Note that the OHSAA prohibits live television or video streaming of tournament contests unless prior permission has been obtained.

**V. TOURNAMENT DRAWS**

Tournament draws were conducted by the OHSAA Executive Director's Office. All semifinal games will be played Wednesday and the final game will be played Friday or Saturday (depending on host). The top team on the bracket will be the home team.

## **46th ANNUAL STATE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT**

**May 30 – June 1, 2024**

**Firestone Park – Akron, Ohio**

### **I. REGULATIONS**

The applicable regulations for the sectional, district and regional softball tournaments shall apply to the state softball tournaments in addition to any listed below.

### **II. TOURNAMENT DRAW**

Tournament draws are conducted by the Executive Director's Office.

### **III. ORDER OF GAMES**

Games will be played in the order of **Division IV, Division III, Division II, Division I**. Games may be adjusted due to weather issues and/or graduation ceremonies.

### **IV. MEETING OF STATE FINALISTS**

The Ohio High School Athletic Association will conduct a mandatory online meeting with coaches and/or athletic administrators of state qualifying teams. Further details will be provided to the state qualifiers.

### **V. PRACTICE**

There shall be no softball practice on the softball fields that will be used during the state tournament other than usual pre-game practice.

### **VI. SOUVENIR PROGRAMS**

Souvenir programs will be sold at the state tournament and provided to the participants at no cost. Procedures for submission of materials for the program by the state qualifiers will be provided by the OHSAA Office.

### **VII. MANAGER OF TOURNAMENT**

The state tournament is under the supervision of the OHSAA.

### **VIII. POSTPONED GAMES**

If inclement weather causes postponement of state softball tournament games on Thursday, Friday or Saturday, the Board of Directors has authorized the Executive Director's Office to schedule postponed games as appropriate. Attempts will be made to reschedule postponed games in their original order.

### **IX. BENCH LIST – TEAM AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Twenty-two players, plus six others (28 total) will be admitted at the pass gate by the Official OHSAA Bench List/Travel Party certified by the principal of the high school. These are the individuals permitted in the team dugout. This Bench List/Travel Party will be used at the entry gate for all sessions of the tournament. The Official Bench List/Travel Party will include space for admission for the bus driver (shall not be in the dugout or bench area). Credentials will provide admission for any of the 12 games of the state tournament.

### **X. MEDIA**

Credentials may be obtained by contacting Tim Stried, Communications Department at the OHSAA Executive Director's Office, at 614-267-2502, ext. 124, or [tstried@ohsaa.org](mailto:tstried@ohsaa.org). All media arrangements are to be made prior to the state tournament. Note that the OHSAA prohibits live television or video streaming of tournament contests unless prior permission has been obtained.