

2023-24 TSSAA Handbook

GIRLS' SOFTBALL REGULATIONS

I. CLASSIFICATION

- A. In Division I, TSSAA schools shall be divided into four classes for girls' softball.
- B. In Division II, TSSAA schools shall be divided into two classes for girls' softball.

II. GENERAL REGULATIONS

- A. After a team has played their first game, there may not be any more practice games or scrimmages.
- B. Players that are registered with TSSAA as members of a high school girls' softball squad shall not participate in independent play until the season has closed. For teams not entering the tournament series, the season closes with the completion of the last scheduled game. For teams participating in the tournament series, the season closes when the team has been eliminated from the tournament series or has won the state championship. After the school year has ended, players on teams that are still in tournament series may participate as independents on amateur teams without endangering their eligibility.
- C. In case it becomes necessary to postpone a regular season game after the umpires have arrived, but before any play takes place, the umpires shall be entitled to collect only half of the fee.

School officials shall be responsible for making certain that game umpires are registered. Schools failing to use registered umpires shall be subject to a \$15.00 fine for each non-registered umpire used.
- D. No explosive devices shall be allowed during regular-season or tournament games.
- E. The TSSAA Board of Control has adopted the use of a double first base when available in accordance with NFHS Softball Rule 1-2-1. The use of a double first base is allowed for any regular or postseason softball contest, but not required. When used, the base shall be a one- or two-piece unit, 15 inches by 30 inches and manufactured to be of equal height. The base in foul territory should be a color other than white.
- F. Participation in county, conference or invitational softball tournaments shall count as four games. **NOTE:** Schools hosting invitational tournaments involving out-of-state teams must have the tournament sanctioned by the TSSAA Office (<https://portal.tssaa.org/common/sanctioning/>)
- G. Videotaping or filming is permitted if the taping or filming is for private use or use by the two schools involved and not for public or commercial use. Videotaping or filming must be done from the individual's seat. Individuals will not be allowed to use tripods. A school taping or filming its own game may use a tripod. A school will not be allowed to tape or film a game unless its team is involved in the game. All taping or filming by a school may be approved by the local Game Director or Tournament Director, and the Tournament Director or Game Director shall assign space, when available, from which the school may tape or film.

III. GAME-ENDING PROCEDURES

- A. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the umpire-in-chief, any remaining play may be shortened at any time, or the game terminated.
- B. In regular-season play, a suspended game shall be considered as no game and may be replayed unless the coaches of both teams mutually agree to continue the game from the point of suspension. In tournament play, a suspended game shall be continued from the point of suspension.
 - a. A suspended game shall be continued from the point of suspension if not enough innings have been played to consider it a regulation game. NFHS Softball Rule 4-2-2 will be followed, which states a game will be considered a completed regulation game provided:
 - i. 5 full innings have been played; or if the home team has scored a greater number of runs in four or four and a fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns.
 - ii. Play has gone beyond 5 full innings and is called when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bat. The score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; unless the home team, in its half of the incomplete inning, scores a run (or runs) which exceeds the opponent's score, in which case, the final score shall be recorded when the game is called.

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- C. The international tie-breaker will be used in tournament play beginning in the 10th inning. The international tie-breaker places the individual scheduled to bat last in the inning as a runner on second base to start each inning. The same process is repeated until one team has scored more runs than the other at the end of a completed inning and is declared the victor.

IV. TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS (Division I)

- A. Tournament play shall begin at the district level provided both districts in the region have three or more teams. If this criterion is met, then each district shall determine the district winner and runner-up in any manner they choose.

It is the responsibility of each district to select a site, tournament director, and determine dates for its respective tournament. This decision shall be made or approved by the Principals and/or Athletic Directors of the schools in the district.

In selecting the site of the district tournament, consideration should be given to the facility that is in the best interest of the schools involved, the participants, and spectators.

Adequate softball facilities may include but are not limited to:

1. Ability to charge admission.
2. Skinned infield.
3. Minimum fence requirements (185' – 235') – Outfield fence requirements as set forth by the NFHS Rule Book.
4. Availability of lights.
5. Adequate dug-outs.

The district champion and runner-up as determined above shall advance to the regional tournament. In the semifinal game of the regional play-off series, the district winner will be the home team and the semifinal pairings shall be as follows:

Winner District 1 vs. Second District 2
Winner District 2 vs. Second District 1
Winner District 3 vs. Second District 4
Winner District 4 vs. Second District 3
Winner District 5 vs. Second District 6
Winner District 6 vs. Second District 5
Winner District 7 vs. Second District 8
Winner District 8 vs. Second District 7
Winner District 9 vs. Second District 10
Winner District 10 vs. Second District 9
Winner District 11 vs. Second District 12
Winner District 12 vs. Second District 11
Winner District 13 vs. Second District 14
Winner District 14 vs. Second District 13
Winner District 15 vs. Second District 16
Winner District 16 vs. Second District 15

In the regional championship games in even-numbered years, the odd-numbered districts (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15) shall be the host team. In odd-numbered years, the even-numbered districts shall be the host team.

If the district winner from a district that is to host the regional finals is defeated, the district runner-up from that district shall host the regional finals. If both teams from a district that is to host the regional finals are defeated, the district winner from the other district shall host the regional finals. (Example: If it is District 1's time to host the region and the District 1 winner is defeated the District 1 runner-up (provided that team wins) shall host the regional finals. If both teams from District 1 are defeated in regional semifinal games, the District 2 winner shall host the regional finals.)

- B. Tournament play shall begin at the region level if one or both districts in the region have less than three teams in each district. If this criterion is met, then the teams within the region shall determine the region winner and runner-up in any manner they choose.

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District coaches shall select their regional tournament site on a rotation basis. In odd-numbered years, the odd-numbered districts in softball (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15) shall select the regional tournament site. In even-numbered years, the even-numbered district shall select the regional tournament site.

- C. In all four classes the first- and second-place teams in each regional tournament shall be eligible to enter the sectional round of state tournament competition.

The sectional round of the state tournament shall be as follows:

Site 1: Winner Region 1 vs. Second Region 2
Site 2: Winner Region 2 vs. Second Region 1
Site 3: Winner Region 3 vs. Second Region 4
Site 4: Winner Region 4 vs. Second Region 3
Site 5: Winner Region 5 vs. Second Region 6
Site 6: Winner Region 6 vs. Second Region 5
Site 7: Winner Region 7 vs. Second Region 8
Site 8: Winner Region 8 vs. Second Region 7

- D. The sectional site will be the regional winner's field, provided it meets the minimum facility requirements. If the event those minimum requirements are not met, then it shall be the responsibility of the host school to secure adequate facilities. Facilities, other than home facilities, must be approved by the state office. There will be one game at each sectional site.
- E. The principal of the host school shall be the Game Director provided the game is played at his or her field. If additional facilities are secured other than those of the host team, the Game Director must be approved by the TSSAA state office. It shall be the duty of the Game Director to handle all financial arrangements for the game and to make a financial report to the state office and participating teams.
- F. The eight winners of the sectional shall advance to the state tournament central site for an eight-team, double-elimination tournament. The draw shall be made so that if two teams from the same region reach the central tournament site, they will be drawn to opposite brackets. The draw shall be made by the state office after the completion of the softball sectionals.
- G. When the established starting time of a postseason contest between two schools conflicts with the previously scheduled Commencement Exercises of one of the schools, and that school has Senior roster player(s), then at the request of the affected school, the contest will be rescheduled for a mutually agreed upon time and site that falls within the postseason timeline established by TSSAA. In the event the two schools do not agree on a rescheduled time and site, the TSSAA office will designate a starting game time and site.

This applies to regional semifinals, regional finals, and sectional contests only.

V. TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS (Division II: Class A and Class AA)

- A. In Class A, if a district tournament is to be played, it is the responsibility of each district to select a site and tournament director and determine dates for its respective tournament. This decision shall be made or approved by the Principals and/or Athletic Directors of the schools in the district.

In selecting the site of the district tournament, consideration should be given to the facility that is in the best interest of the schools involved, the participants, and spectators.

Adequate softball facilities may include but are not limited to:

1. Ability to charge admission.
2. Skinned infield.
3. Minimum fence requirements (185' – 235') – Outfield fence requirements as set forth by the NFHS Rule Book.
4. Availability of lights.
5. Adequate dug-outs.

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- B.** In Class A, it is the responsibility of each region to select a site and tournament director and determine dates for its respective tournament. This decision shall be made or approved by the Principals and/or Athletic Directors of the schools in the region.

In selecting the site of the region tournament, consideration should be given to the facility that is in the best interest of the schools involved, the participants, and spectators.

Adequate softball facilities may include but are not limited to:

1. Ability to charge admission.
2. Skinned infield.
3. Minimum fence requirements (185' – 235') – Outfield fence requirements as set forth by the NFHS Rule Book.
4. Availability of lights.
5. Adequate dug-outs.

- B.** In Class A, the top four teams from the East Region, the top four teams from the Middle Region, and the top four teams from the West Region shall qualify for the first round. The first round sites shall be as follows.

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Site 1:	#4 Middle @ #2 East	#4 Middle @ #3 West	#3 East @ #2 Middle
Site 2:	#4 East vs. #3 West (H)	#3 East vs. #2 West (H)	#4 Middle @ #2 West
Site 3:	#4 West @ #2 Middle	#4 West vs. #2 East (H)	#4 East vs. #3 West (H)
Site 4:	#3 Middle @ #3 East	#3 Middle @ #4 East	#3 Middle @ #4 West

In 2023-24, #1 Middle will host the #4 East vs. #3 West First Round game.

In 2024-25, #1 Middle will host the #4 West vs. #2 East First Round game and #2 Middle will host the #3 East vs. #2 West game.

In 2025-26, #1 Middle will host the #4 East vs. #3 West First Round game.

The Quarterfinal Round sites shall be as follows:

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Site 1:	FR Site 1 Winner @ #2 West	FR Site 1 Winner @ #1 East	FR Site 1 Winner @ #1 West
Site 2:	FR Site 2 Winner @ #1 Middle	FR Site 2 Winner @ #2 Middle	FR Site 2 Winner @ #2 East
Site 3:	FR Site 3 Winner @ #1 East	FR Site 3 Winner @ #1 Middle	FR Site 3 Winner @ #1 Middle
Site 4:	FR Site 4 Winner @ #1 West	FR Site 4 Winner @ #1 West	FR Site 4 Winner @ #1 East

The Executive Director has the authority to select another site if the host's facilities are not adequate to host the games.

The winners of the quarterfinal round games shall advance to the central tournament site.

The State Tournament shall be a four team double elimination tournament. If all three #1 Seeds advance to the central tournament site, the first matches of the state tournament shall be as follows:

- Game 1: Quarterfinal Site 1 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 2 Winner
Game 2: Quarterfinal Site 3 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 4 Winner

If all three #1 Seeds do not advance to the central tournament site, the bracket shall be set by the Executive Director upon completion of the quarterfinal round matches.

- C.** In Class AA, there will be an East Region, Middle Region, and West Region. The ten teams that qualify for the post-season tournament shall be as follows: the top three teams from the East Region, the top four teams from the Middle Region, and the top three teams from the West Region. Seeding will be based on regular season records. The First Round sites shall be as follows:

- Site 1: #4 Middle @ #3 Middle
Site 2: #5 Middle @ #3 East

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The Quarterfinal Round sites shall be as follows:

- Site 1: First Round Site 1 Winner @ #1 West
- Site 2: #2 East @ #2 Middle
- Site 3: #2 West @ #1 East
- Site 4: First Round Site 2 Winner @ #1 Middle

The Executive Director has the authority to select another site if the host's facilities are not adequate to host the game.

The winners of the quarterfinal round games shall advance to the central tournament site for a four team double elimination tournament. The first games of the state tournament shall be as follows:

- Semifinals: Quarterfinal Site 1 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 2 Winner
- Semifinals: Quarterfinal Site 3 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 4 Winner

- D. When the established starting time of a postseason contest between two schools conflicts with the previously scheduled Commencement Exercises of one of the schools, and that school has Senior roster player(s), then at the request of the affected school, the contest will be rescheduled for a mutually agreed upon time and site that falls within the postseason timeline established by TSSAA. In the event the two schools do not agree on a rescheduled time and site, the TSSAA Office will designate a starting game time and site. This applies to region tournament games and the quarterfinal round of the State Tournament.

VI. TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS

- A. In the Division I and Division II district tournaments, the coaches of the schools in the tournament shall select an umpire association recognized by TSSAA to work the tournament. The entire group must have an opportunity to vote on the association to be used.
- B. In Division I regional and sectional games, umpires shall be provided by the local association that services the host school.
- C. In Division II regional, first round, and quarterfinal games, umpires shall be provided by the local association that services the host school.
- D. In the Division I and Division II state tournaments, the umpires shall be assigned by the state office.