



2017 NFHS SOFTBALL RULES  
POWERPOINT

National Federation of State  
High School Associations

Take Part. Get Set For Life.™

Rules Changes  
Major Editorial Changes  
Points of Emphasis

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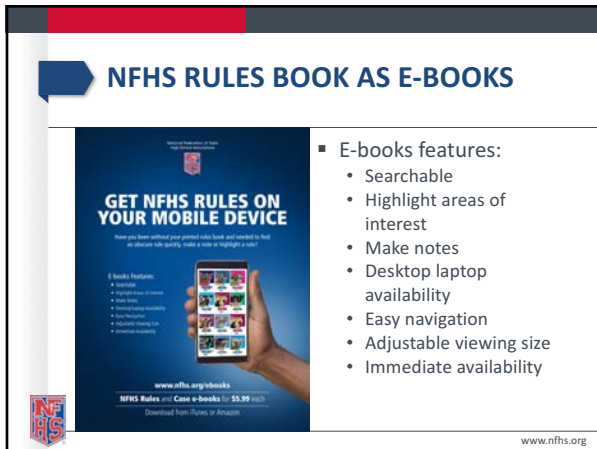
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2017 NFHS SOFTBALL  
RULES CHANGES



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Rule Change

**SPORTSMANSHIP..."TOGETHER WE MAKE THE RIGHT CALL"**

- Zero Tolerance (all sports) -- Automatic Ejection
  - Inappropriate language/profanity
  - Assistant coaches contesting calls

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Rule Change

**SPORTSMANSHIP..."TOGETHER WE MAKE THE RIGHT CALL"**

- If **assistant coach** is on the field (coaching bases) and contests a call – automatic ejection.
  - If **assistant coach** is in dugout contesting call – restrict to dugout by NFHS rule code.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – automatic ejection

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Rule Change

**SPORTSMANSHIP..."TOGETHER WE MAKE THE RIGHT CALL"**

- No coach may come onto the field or to the home plate area to contest a call.
  - If they come onto the field of play (between the foul lines) or immediately towards home plate – automatic ejection.
  - **Head coach** may come to the respective foul line in front of their dugout, midway between home plate and first/third base, to confer with crew chief to make an appeal/protest.

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Rule Change

**SPORTSMANSHIP..."TOGETHER WE MAKE THE RIGHT CALL"**

▪ **Head Coach Appeal:**

- This appeal/request must be done in a professional manner.
- When a ruling is given, the appealing coach must return to the dugout.
- If the call is overturned, opposing coach may come out to the foul line in front of their respective dugout for an explanation without penalty

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Rule Change

**SPORTSMANSHIP..."TOGETHER WE MAKE THE RIGHT CALL"**

▪ **Head Coach Appeal:**

- If the appealing coach questions the call or is unsporting in his conference, a team defensive conference will be charged.
- If the conversation/action of the appealing coach warrants, restriction to the dugout or/ejection will be given.
- If no defensive conferences are available and coach comes out to confer – automatic ejection if action is unsporting.

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Rule Change

**SPORTSMANSHIP..."TOGETHER WE MAKE THE RIGHT CALL"**

▪ Any player displaying verbal or physical dissent to an umpire:

- Restricted to the dugout.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – ejection from contest.

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Rule Change

## SPORTSMANSHIP... "TOGETHER WE MAKE THE RIGHT CALL"

- Any physical or verbal display in a negative/demonstrative manner by **school administrator**
  - Stop game and warn.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – Game suspended until administrator leaves the area.

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Rule Change

## BATS RULE 1-5-2c

c. Taper. The taper is the transition area which connects the narrower handle to the wider barrel portion of the bat. The taper shall have a **solid surface** and ~~shall have a~~ conical shape. Its length and material may vary.

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Rule Change

## BATS RULE 1-5-2c

Diagram A

Diagram B

- The rule has been changed and no longer requires the taper to have a solid surface.

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Rule Change

**UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT  
RULE 3-2-1**

**ART. 1 . . .** Uniforms of all team members shall be of the same color and style. State associations may, on an individual basis, permit a player to participate while wearing a different style uniform for religious reasons, inclement weather, etc.

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Rule Change

**UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT  
RULE 3-2-1**

- Associations can make exceptions relative to inclement weather, religion and other circumstances.

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Rule Change

**UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT  
RULE 3-2-7**

Exposed undergarments, if worn, are considered part of the official uniform. All exposed undergarments shall be a solid single color: black, white, gray or a school color.

- a. For individual players, exposed upper-body undergarments do not have to be the same color as exposed lower-body undergarments.
- b. For all team members, exposed upper-body undergarments shall be the same solid single color, and all exposed lower-body undergarments shall be the same solid single color.

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Rule Change

**UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT  
RULE 3-2-7**

c. Garments other than team uniforms such as arm sleeves, leg sleeves, and tights are permissible. Anything worn on the arm or leg is a sleeve, except a brace, and shall meet the color restrictions.

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Rule Change

**UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT  
RULE 3-2-7**

Player A  
  
Legal

Player B  
  
Illegal

Player C  
  
Illegal

- Undergarments shall be the same solid single color: black, white, gray or a solid school color.

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Rule Change

**UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT  
RULE 3-2-15 NEW**

ART 15 . . . All equipment shall be inspected by the umpire, and is to be placed outside the dugout/bench prior to the start of the game.

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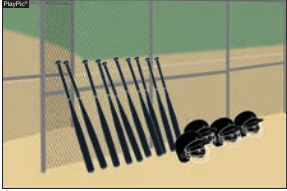
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Rule Change

**UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT  
RULE 3-2-15 NEW**



- Teams are required to have equipment lined up against dugout/bench area for umpires to check prior to the start of the game.


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Rule Change

**BENCH AND FIELD CONDUCT  
RULE 3-6-7 PENALTY**

**ART. 7 . . .** Players and substitutes shall not enter the contest unreported.

**PENALTY:** Players and substitutes shall not enter the contest unreported. The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. The head coach is also restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game for a second violation.


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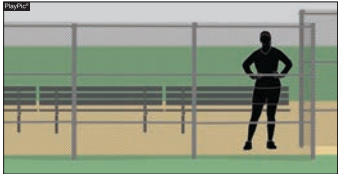
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Rule Change

**BENCH AND FIELD CONDUCT  
RULE 3-6-7 PENALTY**



- Language has been added to the substitution rule to make it clear when a coach is also restricted to the dugout/bench area for a second unreported substitution violation.


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Editorial Change

**INFRACTIONS BY PITCHER (F.P)  
RULE 6-2-2**

**ART. 2 . . .**The pitcher shall not at any time during the game be allowed to use tape or any other substance on the ball or contact points of the pitching hand or fingers; nor shall any other player apply a foreign substance to the ball. A pitcher who licks her fingers shall wipe them off before bringing them in contact with the ball. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin or any comparable drying agent may be used to dry the hand. It is not necessary to wipe off the drying agent before making contact with the ball. The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm or thighs which the umpire judges to be distracting to the batter.

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Editorial Change

**INFRACTIONS BY PITCHER (F.P)  
RULE 6-2-2**

- A pitcher does not have to wipe off the drying agent before making contact with the ball.

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## Editorial Change

### BATTER IS OUT RULE 7-4-8 NOTE

ART. 8 . . . The batter hits the ball fair or foul while either foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or while touching the plate.

- The note instructing the umpire to ignore the batter's follow through was removed. This note did not clarify the rule, and often created confusion in the administration of the rule.



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## Editorial Change

### THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER RULE 8-1-2 PENALTY

c.(F.P.) a pitched ball (not entirely in the batter's box) not swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter's hands are not to be considered part of the bat.



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## Editorial Change

### THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER RULE 8-1-2 PENALTY



- Language regarding a hit batter that was originally inserted in the rules book in 2013 was inadvertently omitted.



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Editorial Change

**BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT  
RULE 8-2-4 EXCEPTION**

The batter-runner shall be called out when:

**ART. 4 . . .** The batter-runner fails to advance to first base and enters the dugout/bench area after a batted fair ball, a base on balls, a hit batter (F.P.), a dropped third strike (F.P.), or catcher obstruction.

**EXCEPTION:** The ball is dead on a base on balls (S.P.), or on a hit batter **who is injured** (F.P.), the ball is dead, the batter-runner is not out and runners cannot advance unless forced.

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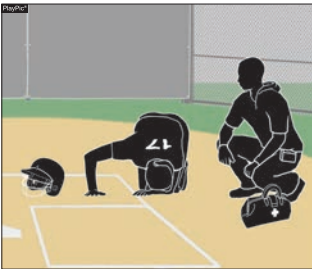
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Editorial Change

**BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT  
RULE 8-2-4 EXCEPTION**



- If a hit batter leaves the game because of an injury, she is not out if she doesn't go to first base.

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**NFHS SOFTBALL  
POINTS OF EMPHASIS**



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**PITCHING POSITION**

- There has been a noticeable increase in the use of wristbands to communicate pitching signals in the last few years.
- Many coaches are verbally or visually communicating a series of numbers which the players lookup on a wristband.
- Typically the pitcher is behind and not in contact with the pitcher's plate when this occurs. This practice is legal as long as the pitcher still complies with Rule 6-1-1.

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**PITCHING POSITION RULE 6-1-1**

- a. Prior to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with shoulders in line with first and third base with the ball in the glove or pitching hand, and with the hands separated.
- b. While in this position, the pitcher shall take (or simulate taking) a signal from the catcher. Even if they took the actual signal behind and not in contact with the pitcher's plate they must comply to this section of the rule by simulating taking the signal from the catcher once they are on the pitcher's plate with their hands still separated.

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**PITCHING POSITION RULE 6-1-1**

- c. After completing "b" in the previous slide, the pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving.

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## PITCHING POSITION

- NFHS Softball's pitching rule supports a wide range of pitching styles by allowing a pitcher to start with both feet on the pitcher's plate, one foot on and one foot behind or to step backward as a part of their pitching motion.
- Rule 6-1-1 states that the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot on or partially on the top surface of the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.


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## PITCHING POSITION

- Rule 6-1-2b states that once the hands are brought together and are in motion, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery.
- Any step backward shall begin before the hands come together. The step backward may end before or after the hands come together.


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## PITCHING POSITION SUMMARY

- Must step on the pitcher's plate with hands separated. Pivot foot must be on or partially on top of the pitcher's plate, non-pivot foot must be in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate, both feet must start and remain within or partially within the 24" length of the pitcher's plate.
- Must take or simulate taking a signal from the catcher with the hands separated.


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Points of Emphasis

**PITCHING POSITION SUMMARY**

3. Must start to step backward prior to the hands coming together.

- Hands can be moving toward each other but may not be together prior to starting the backward step.
- The backward step may end before or after the hands come together.

4. Following the step backward all other aspect of Rule 6-1 and 6-2 must be followed to remain a legal pitch.

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Points of Emphasis

**REFLECTIVE MATERIALS, ADORNMENTS**



- A uniform shall not have any reflective adornments.
- Reflective materials on ribbons, bows, and headbands, including glitter and rhinestones, are considered illegal and should not be permitted.

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Points of Emphasis

**HEADBANDS**



- Teams are reminded that a headband that is designed to be tied in the back, is not considered a bandanna, and is legal if it meets the color and manufacturer's logo restrictions.

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## Points of Emphasis

## DP/FLEX REMINDERS

- The DP can never play defense only.
- The FLEX can never be on offense only.
- The FLEX and DP can NEVER play offense at the same time. The FLEX and DP positions are linked by the DP/FLEX rule. If the FLEX is going to play offense they have to do it in the original DP's position, therefore only one of them can play offense at a time.



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## Points of Emphasis

## DP/FLEX REMINDERS

- The FLEX and DP can play defense at the same time. The DP can play defense for any player other than the FLEX and no one has left the game.
- The starting DP and FLEX players have one re-entry just as all players do.
- Once the game is started with the DP/FLEX positions in the lineup those positions are available for the entire game. Even if the starting DP or starting FLEX has left the game a second time, the positions are still available and an eligible substitute can enter the game as the FLEX or DP. So even though the starting player(s) left the game twice and cannot re-enter, their positions are still active as long as the team has eligible substitutes.



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## Points of Emphasis

## DP/FLEX REMINDERS

1. A DP does not have to be used.	7. If the starting DP plays defense for the FLEX player, the FLEX player has left the game and the team continues with 9 players.
2. If used it must be noted on the starting lineup.	8. The FLEX player can bat or run, but only in the original DP's position. Therefore, the FLEX player and the DP can never be on offense simultaneously.
3. A team using the DP starts the game with 10 players on the lineup card, but could end the game with 9 or 10.	9. When the FLEX player bats for the DP, the FLEX player bats in position of the original DP. The DP is considered to have left the game, but the FLEX player has not.
4. The 10th/11th DP can play defense for any of the other 9 players in the lineup.	10. If the DP re-enters the game, she must do so in her original batting order position and the FLEX player must (a) move back to the No. 10 position in the lineup, or (b) leave the game. If the FLEX player moves back to the 10 <sup>th</sup> position in the lineup, the team resumes the game with 10 players and the FLEX player has never left the game.
5. If the starting DP plays defense for a player listed within the first 9 batting positions in the lineup, that player will continue to bat in her original position in the lineup and has not left the game.	11. A substitute can enter the game for either the DP or the FLEX position. The substitute can enter on defense, or as a pinch hitter or pinch runner.
6. The player listed in the 10 <sup>th</sup> position in the lineup will play defense only and will be called a FLEX player. The DP and the FLEX player can play defense simultaneously.	

## REMINDERS:

- 1) The DP can never be on DEFENSE ONLY.
- 2) The FLEX player can never be on OFFENSE ONLY.
- 3) The DP and FLEX player can never be on offense at the same time.
- 4) The STARTER and the SUBSTITUTE cannot be in the game at the same time.
- 5) The starting DP and FLEX player have one re-entry just as any other player.
- 6) Once the game is started with the DP/FLEX positions in the lineup, those positions are available for the entire game.
- 7) The penalty for illegal re-entry of the DP or FLEX player is always restriction to the bench/dugout.
- 8) If the player is on offense, she is called out. If the player is on defense, the team on offense may have the choice of taking the result of the play or accepting the penalty.



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## NFHS OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION CENTRAL HUB

<https://nfhs-softball.arbitersports.com/front/105414/Site>

- Contains:
  - Sport information
  - Rules information
  - Rules library
  - Searchable rules book
  - Video content on officiating sport, competition situations and interpretations

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## NFHS OFFICIALS EDUCATION COURSE AND VIDEOS

- Ideal for new officials or those in first few years of officiating
- 30-45 minutes to complete
- Topics include: Basics of Becoming and Staying an Official, Science of Officiating, Art of Officiating
- Course is FREE to NFHS Officials Association members, non-members fee is \$20
- NFHSLearn.com
- Sports such as soccer, basketball and baseball offer direct illustrations of the rules book, including rules references and officials signals
- Animated mechanics videos for softball and baseball umpires
- Video interpretation of the NFHS Basketball Rules Book created through a partnership with the International Association of Approved Basketball Officials

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### Board Approved Items

- + Skill Development/Dead Periods
  - Dead Periods lengthened
    - Fall: August 1 - September 15
    - Winter: October 31 - December 15
    - Spring: February 13 - April 1 \*
    - Also during football skill development
- + Unlimited numbers during skill development
  - Max of 1.5 hours a day
- + Playoff Berths/Qualifications/Seeding
  - 1 year pilot for all sports

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### Board Approved Items

- ❖ Pre-participation physicals required once every 395 days
- ❖ Require game officials to obtain and record the name of the game day administrator in charge of the event.
  - ❖ If no administrator is available, the Head Coach will be designated as the game day administrator.
  - ❖ Game day administrator will assign staff to monitor thunder/lightening
- ❖ 2017-18: WBGT readings must be taken by the AT/FR or designee not more than 30 minutes before the beginning of practice. Subsequent readings must be taken whenever water/rest breaks are taken or every 30 minutes, whichever comes first.

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### Important Dates

Start	Monday, February 13
1 <sup>st</sup> Contest	Monday, February 27
Reporting	Monday, May 8 - 6:00 a.m.
Seeding	Monday, May 8
1 <sup>st</sup> Round	Wednesday, May 10
2 <sup>nd</sup> Round	Saturday, May 13
3 <sup>rd</sup> Round	Tuesday, May 16
4 <sup>th</sup> Round	Friday, May 19
Regionals	Tuesday-Saturday, May 23-27
States	Friday, June 2
	Saturday, June 3

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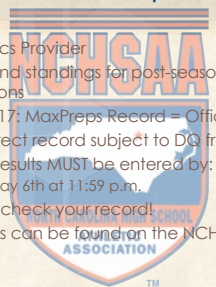
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## MaxPreps

Official Statistics Provider

- + Records and standings for post-season qualifications
  - 2016-17: MaxPreps Record = Official Record
  - Incorrect record subject to DQ from playoffs
- + All game results MUST be entered by:
  - + Sat, May 6th at 11:59 p.m.
  - + Triple check your record!
- + Instructions can be found on the NCHSAA website



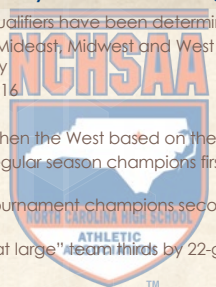
## Qualifying for the Playoffs

- + 64-team brackets
- + Automatic Qualifiers
  - + 1st in a straight conference
  - + 1st in your class of split conference
    - Cannot have 2 conference tournaments
  - + 1st in the conference tournament
    - Regular season champions do not compete
- + At-Large Qualifiers
  - + Best 22-game winning percentage



## Playoff Seeding

- + Once the 64 qualifiers have been determined
  - Split East, Mideast, Midwest and West based on geography
  - Groups of 16
- + Seed the East then the West based on the following:
  - Seed all regular season champions first by 22-game record
  - Seed all tournament champions second by 22-game record
  - Seed all "at large" team thirds by 22-game record



### Playoff Seeding

- East vs Mideast
  - #1 East vs #16 Mideast
  - #2 East vs #15 Mideast
- West vs Midwest
  - #1 West vs #16 Midwest
  - #2 West vs #15 Midwest




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### Sportsmanship

The quality of responsible behavior characterized by a spirit of generosity and a genuine concern for opponents, officials and teammates.

- Wholesome athletic environment
- Good Sportsmanship > Victory
- Modest in victory, gracious in defeat
- Respecting judgment and integrity of game officials
- Role modeling good behavior




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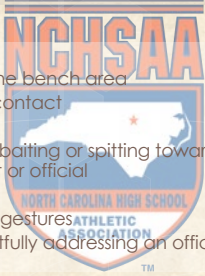
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### Ejection Policy

- Fighting
- Leaving the bench area
- Flagrant contact
- Biting
- Taunting, baiting or spitting toward an opponent or official
- Profanity
- Obscene gestures
- Disrespectfully addressing an official




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## Ejection Follow-Up

- + Teaching & Modeling Behavior Course
  - Required for any coach ejected during a contest
  - Required for any coach who has player (s) ejected for fighting
- + NFHS Sportsmanship Course
  - For any ejected/disqualified player
  - Free, on-line course ([nfhslearn.com](http://nfhslearn.com))
- + All certificates must be sent to NCHSAA

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## Inclement/ Hot Weather Guidelines

The following should be considered when scheduling practice:

- + Time of day
- + Intensity level of practice
- + Equipment worn
- + Environmental conditions

High Temperature and high humidity create a dangerous situation for athletes. High humidity and low temperature can also cause serious heat-related problems.

Water/fluid replacement breaks recommended each 20 or 30 minutes, (depending on practice conditions)

Check with your AD on your EA's and school's policy pertaining to practice on days of extreme heat.

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## Dead Periods

Summer 2016	July 4-July 10 and July 18-24
Fall 2016	August 1 through September 15
Winter 20156	Oct 31 through December 15
Spring 2017	N/A (In Season)
Summer 2017	July 3-July 9 and July 17-July 23

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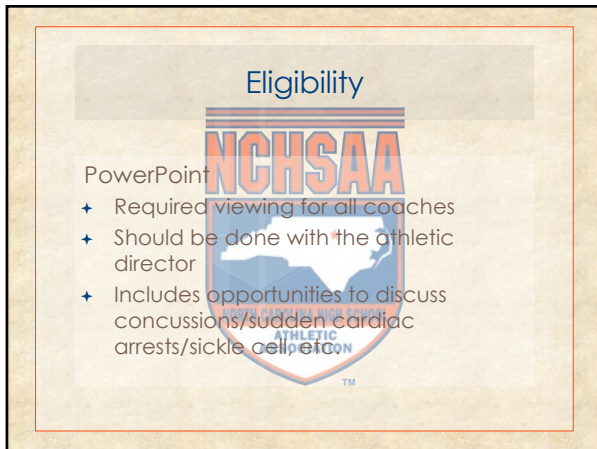
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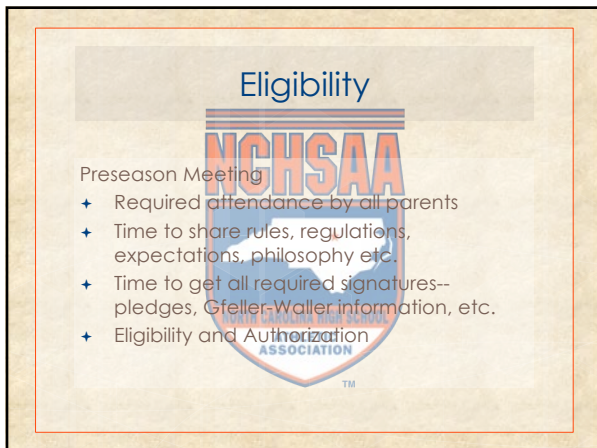
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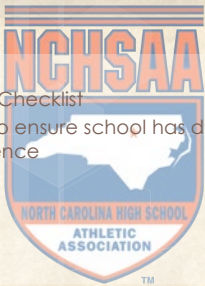
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### Eligibility



- ✦ Eligibility Checklist
  - Use to ensure school has done its due diligence

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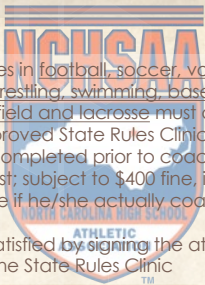
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### Clinic Attendance



**Head** coaches in football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, swimming, baseball, softball, golf, track & field and lacrosse must attend an NCHSAA approved State Rules Clinic.

- ✦ Must be completed prior to coaching in the first contest; subject to \$400 fine, in addition to a \$500 fine if he/she actually coaches in the contest
- ✦ Can be satisfied by signing the attendance sheet at the State Rules Clinic

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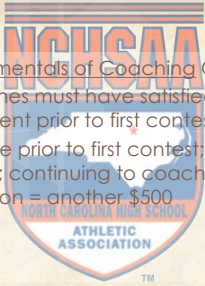
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### Coaches' Education



NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course

- ✦ **All** coaches must have satisfied the requirement prior to first contest.
- ✦ Complete prior to first contest; subject to a \$500 fine; continuing to coach without completion = another \$500

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## Coaches' Education

**Concussion Management Certification**

- + The **NFHS Concussion Course** (free on-line course) or an equivalent course must be completed annually by all coaches
- + **Prior to the first date of practice for that sport**; subsequently, the certificate of completion must be on file at the individual school; subject to \$500 fine

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## Gfeller-Waller Concussion Law

**Requirements of the Law:**

- + Concussion signs and symptoms
  - Given prior to participation
  - Parents/athletes sign indicating "receipt of" **Return to Play (RTP)** form signed by a physician licensed to practice medicine
  - An up-to-date **Emergency Action Plan (EAP)** Must be on-file  
Must be posted  
Must be updated annually
- + **"When in doubt, sit them out"**<sup>TM</sup>

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## Cardiac Safety Program

All NCHSAA member schools must have a Cardiac Safety Program to include three (3) components:

- + Appropriate number of AEDs on Campus
- + AED maintenance program (battery checks, maintain, replacement at appropriate intervals)
- + Required viewing of short AED/CPR video for all supervising adults (teachers, coaches, administrators)

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## Safety Policy

Effective Aug 1, 2017

That all head and paid coaches must be CPR/AED certified.



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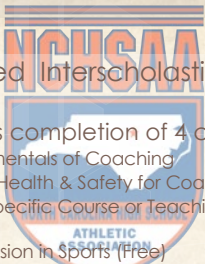
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## Coaches' Education

Accredited Interscholastic Coach (AIC)

- Requires completion of 4 courses:
  - Fundamentals of Coaching
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Aid, Health & Safety for Coaches
  - Sport Specific Course or Teaching Sports Skills
  - Concussion in Sports (Free)



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## Coaches' Education

Certified Interscholastic Coach (CIC)

- Completion of AIC requirements
- Plus:
  - Teaching & Modeling Behavior
  - Engaging Effectively with Parents
  - Sportsmanship
  - Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment
  - Strength & Conditioning
  - 2 additional courses (User Choice)



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### Transfer Policy

- If a bona fide change of residence—no transfer waiver necessary
- Transfer packet with forms are on-line; password protected
- Work with athletic director to ensure students meet residence rule requirements



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**THANK YOU AND HAVE A GREAT SEASON!**

[www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)



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