



**POLICY AND PROCEDURES
FOR
SOFTBALL
2025-26**



NHIAA SOFTBALL COMMITTEE:

Lisa Gingras, Chair, Nashua; Todd Austin, Plymouth; Kerry Brady, White Mountains;
Sheila Colson, Asst. Chair, Spaulding; Phil DeRosa, Nashua;
Ken Edwards, Merrimack Valley; Brock Ingalls, Littleton; Peter Perich, Manchester

POINTS OF SPECIAL EMPHASIS

➤ **Electronic Devices:**

Per NFHS Rule 1-9-6: during the game, the use of electronic devices by team personnel to transmit or record information pertaining to their players or team's performance shall be permitted for coaching purposes within the team's dugout/bench area only, provided the point of origin of the electronic communication is outside of the field of play. No player shall transmit or record audio or video from the playing surface.

- Meta and/or AI smart glasses/sunglasses with the capability of recording are prohibited.

➤ **Video/Camera Restrictions:**

Phones and/or cameras shall not be hung on the backstops for Game Changer Live. The NHIAA and NFHS have the rights to all live streaming videos.

➤ **Suspended Games:**

Per NFHS Rule 2-26-1, A halted or suspended game is a game that is temporarily suspended by the umpire with the intent that it will be continued at some later time or date. If the state adopts the suspended game procedure, the game shall be resumed from the point of suspension (4-2-3).

- Rule 4-2-3: ... A state association may adopt game ending procedures that determine how games are ended, including suspended games. However, if a state association does not have established game-ending procedures, by mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the plate umpire, any remaining play may be shortened at any time or the game terminated.

NOTES:

1. If a state association has adopted game-ending procedures, only those game-ending procedures may be used should the opposing coaches wish to terminate a game.
2. By state association adoption, the number of innings for one or both games in a doubleheader may be scheduled for five innings. Current state association game-ending procedures still apply.

The NHIAA Softball Committee has adopted NFHS Rule 2-26-1: Halted or Suspended Games.

➤ **Appropriate attire for coaches in accordance with National Federation Softball Rules 3-5-3 is as follows:**

- ...Any time a coach is in the live-all area to confer with players or an umpire, or to occupy coaches box, the coach shall be attired in school uniform or jersey/coaching shirt with coaching shorts/slacks or warm up suits (including fleece warm-ups) in school colors or colors of khaki, black, white, or gray. Cutoffs or any type of jeans are prohibited. Jackets are not considered part of the coach's uniform.
- A hat worn by a coach shall be team related
- Coach's attire shall be professional
- Coach's attire shall be team colors or neutral colors only
- Coach's clothing with additional logos shall be team related
- All coaches not in compliance will be reported to the NHIAA.

- **Appropriate attire for players, in accordance with National Federation Softball Rules 3-2, include but are not limited to:**
 - Uniforms of all team members shall be of the same color and style.
 - ... No players on the same team shall wear identical numbers (0 and 00) are considered the same number.
 - ...Exposed undergarments, if worn, are considered part of the official uniform. All exposed undergarments shall be black, white, gray, or a solid color...**(all team members shall be the same solid, single color).**
 - Any tape on the helmet must be other same color of the helmet

- **Helmet Rule**
 - Any visible logos on the helmets must be school related, excluding manufactured logos.
 - The responsibility is that of the Athletic Directors and Coaches to ensure that helmets be school color or neutral.
 - If unable to provide school colored or neutral colored helmets for the entire team, a deviation will need to be requested by the NHIAA.

- Equipment no longer has to be inspected by the umpire or placed outside the dugout/bench prior to the start of the game. The responsibility for ensuring that players are legally and properly equipped rests with the head coach and school administration.

- **Athletic Trainers:**
Schools requesting medical services are to provide the necessary supplies for the athletic trainer at all regular season and tournament events.

- At all neutral sites, post season, semis and finals, any music played before and during the game is under the discretion and control of the site director.

- **SAT's:**
Please note the SAT's are set for Saturday, June 6, 2026. In the past, this date has fallen on one of the softball tournament dates. In order to avoid conflict with tournament dates and/or potential make-ups on this date, it is recommended that players take their SAT's in May to avoid any conflict.

- **Flex Rule – See NFHS Rulebook:**
3-3-6 (F.P.) Replaces the Designated Hitter (DH) Rule with the Designated Player/FLEX Rule. The main differences being: 1) The role of the DP (offensive player) is never terminated, it is possible for a team to go from 10 to nine players and back to 10 players any number of times during the game; and 2) The DP (offensive player) and the FLEX (defensive player for whom she is batting) can play defense at the same time.
(See NFHS: Flex Player, Revises Designated Player Rule Article Included in Policy and Procedures Manual)

- **NFHS Guidelines for Management of Concussions:**
NFHS Guidelines for Management of Concussions: The NHIAA mandates the following of the NFHS guidelines for management of Concussions. Concussions: Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional. For additional information and potential symptoms, please be sure to visit By-Law Article III; Sports Medicine: Sect. 13: Concussions and the New Hampshire SB402 and its language as written.

Rosters are submitted on-line utilizing the AD's Admin login.

*Topics that have been removed from the Points of Emphasis are still contained within the body of the document, the NFHS Rules of Softball, and the NHIAA Handbook. These items are *starred* throughout the Policy and Procedure Manual.*



NFHS Softball Rules Changes

SOFTBALL RULES CHANGES - 2026

July 09, 2025

1-9-6: No player shall transmit or record audio or video from the playing surface. New language further clarifies the use of electronic devices and what is not permitted.

Rationale: This change clearly defines the types of electronic devices prohibited by the rule.

Rule 8: Rule 8 has been reformatted for clarity. Changes have separated longer articles, and organized exceptions, penalties, and effects into outline format for improved comprehension.

Rationale: Added article references to PENALTIES and EFFECTS, and Section 4 was separated into two sections addressing runners entitled to advance with and without liability to be put out to delineate differences.

10-4-2: Umpires have the option of wearing heather gray, charcoal gray, or navy blue slacks. Effective January 1, 2027, heather gray slacks will no longer be permitted as part of the umpire's uniform.

Rationale: Manufacturers have discontinued producing heather gray umpire pants. This change will assist umpires in the purchase of pants that are currently being manufactured.

2026 SOFTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-6, 2-25-3, 3-2-3a & b, 4-3-2, 7-1-1, 7-2-2, 8-2-4 EXCEPTION, 8-2-12 PENALTY 2, 8-5-2 PENALTIES 1 & 2, 8-7-14 PENALTY 2, 8-7-16 PENALTY 2, 8-9-15c, 8-9-15 PENALTIES

2026 SOFTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Obstruction
2. Maintaining an Unobstructed View

2025-26 Softball Roster is Due: Tuesday, May 26, 2026

All tournament teams will be limited to a maximum of 23 individuals, with no more than 18 of them being players in uniform. The remainder of the roster will include one (1) head coach, two (2) assistant coaches, and two (2) managers. Rosters shall be completed via the NHIAA website. If a team is going to make the tournament, a team photo in uniform (no warm-ups and no mascots allowed) must be submitted with a photo lineup. If no photo is received a logo will be supplemented.

1. Softball will be governed by the NHIAA Softball Committee.
2. Refer to the 2025-26 NHIAA Handbook; By-Law Article XXXIX: Corresponding Dates; for season dates.
3. **Game Administration**
Two (2) registered umpires of the New Hampshire Softball Umpires Association must umpire **ALL** regular season games. All games are protestable in accordance with the 2025-26 NHIAA Handbook, By-Law Article VII, Protest Procedure for All Sports.
4. **Schedule Requirements**
 - a. The maximum number of games to qualify for tournament play shall be twenty (20) per season.
 - b. The minimum number of games will be twelve (12) in division, for ALL Divisions.

5. **Equipment**

- **N.O.C.S.A.E. APPROVED EQUIPMENT MUST BE WORN.**

- **Balls:**

- The Wilson A9011 Item # WTA9011BSST: 12” is the official NHIAA 2026 ball and shall be used in all tournament games.
- All game balls at all levels of play shall have the NFHS Authenticating Mark imprinted.

The following procedure is to be followed:

- a. Prior to the start of the game the head official is to inspect the game ball(s) to ensure the NFHS Authenticating Mark is imprinted. If the home team’s ball does not have the mark the visiting team’s ball with the Authenticating Mark is to be used.
- b. In the event neither ball has the mark, the game is to be played and the head game official is to report the matter to the Supervisor of Officials, who in turn will notify the NHIAA office.
 - **Bats:**
All bats shall meet the 2004 ASA Bat Performance Standard, bear either the 2000 or 2004 ASA certification mark, and not be on the ASA non-approved list as found on www.asasoftball.com
- c. Equipment no longer has to be inspected by the umpire or placed outside the dugout/bench prior to the start of the game. The responsibility for ensuring that players are legally and properly equipped rests with the head coach and school administration.
- d. In 2021, the NFHS Softball Rules Committee approved new ball specifications which are required by January 1, 2025, for high school competition. The changes do not represent a difference in ball performance but allow for better control over the manufacturing process. Softball companies are currently producing balls that comply with the 2025 specifications. There will be no visible changes to the ball markings for high school softball, which include the core, compression, and NFHS authenticating mark.

6. **Recommended Pre-Game Practice Schedule For Regular Season And Tournament Games** (Starts one half hour prior to game time)

No batting practice is allowed on a game field prior to **tournament games at neutral sites.**

Home Fielding Practice -1st 10 minutes Visiting Fielding Practice -2nd 10 minutes.

7. **Playing Rules (After the game starts)**
- a. The fast pitch RULE 6 of NFHS Softball Rulebook will be used to govern all interscholastic games.
 - b. **Suspended Games:** Per NFHS Rule 2-26-1, A halted or suspended game is a game that is temporarily suspended by the umpire with the intent that it will be continued at some later time or date. If the state adopts the suspended game procedure, the game shall be resumed from the point of suspension (4-2-3).
 - Rule 4-2-3: ... A state association may adopt game ending procedures that determine how games are ended, including suspended games. However, if a state association does not have established game-ending procedures, by mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the plate umpire, any remaining play may be shortened at any time or the game terminated.
- NOTES:
1. If a state association has adopted game-ending procedures, only those game-ending procedures may be used should the opposing coaches wish to terminate a game.
 2. By state association adoption, the number of innings for one or both games in a doubleheader may be scheduled for five innings. Current state association game-ending procedures still apply.
The NHIAA Softball Committee has adopted NFHS Rule 2-26-1: Halted or Suspended Games.
- c. **Game Ending Rule for Regular Season and Tournament Games:**
 - All regular season games including double headers shall be seven (7) innings, unless the twelve (12) run game ending rule comes into effect. When playing out-of-state, the host school's state association rules will be enforced. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings, unless extra inning(s) are necessary because of a tie score, or unless shortened because the home team needs none of its half of the seventh inning; only a fraction of it; or because of weather or darkness. If weather or darkness interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire, it is a regulation game if: A) five full innings have been played or if the home team has scored an equal or greater number of runs in four, or four fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns at bat; or if B) if play has gone beyond five full innings.
 - All Tournament games will be played the full seven (7) innings. The only exception to this rule is if the twelve (12) run rule occurs
 - d. **Appropriate attire for coaches in accordance with National Federation Softball Rules 3-5-3 is as follows:**
 - Any time a coach is in the live-all area to confer with players or an umpire, or to occupy coaches box, the coach shall be attired in school uniform or jersey/coaching shirt with coaching shorts/slacks or warm up suits (including fleece warm-ups) in school colors or colors of khaki, black, white, or gray. Cutoffs or any type of jeans are prohibited. Jackets are not considered part of the coach's uniform.
 - A hat worn by a coach shall be team related
 - Coach's attire shall be professional
 - Coach's attire shall be team colors or neutral colors only
 - Coach's clothing with additional logos shall be team related
 - All coaches not in compliance will be reported to the NHIAA.
 - e. **Appropriate attire for players, in accordance with National Federation Softball Rules 3-2, include but are not limited to:**
 - Uniforms of all team members shall be of the same color and style.
 - No players on the same team shall wear identical numbers. 0 and 00 are considered the same number.

- Exposed undergarments, if worn, are considered part of the official uniform. All exposed undergarments shall be black, white, gray, or a solid color (**all team members shall be the same solid, single color**).

8. Reporting Game Results

It is the responsibility of **ALL TEAMS** to enter scores through their BigTeams/Schedule Star login immediately following games to insure accurate standings. If playing out-of-state, the New Hampshire team is responsible for entering the score on the web site. Home of the higher seed in each tournament game shall update the web after each playoff game.

9. Programs

Digital tournament programs will be created and will be accessible via the Tournament Info page on the NHIAA Website (www.nhcaa.org/tournament-info). All program rights are reserved by the Softball Committee and the NHIAA.

10. Bench And Field Conduct

A coach, player, substitute, attendant or other bench personnel shall not:

- Carelessly throw a bat or fake a tag without the ball;
 - Deliberately throw a bat; or
 - Call "Time" or use any command or commit any act for the purpose of trying to cause the opposing pitcher to commit an illegal pitch.
 - Use words or act, to incite, or try to incite spectators to demonstrations; intimidate, or use remarks, which reflect upon an opposing player, umpire or spectator; or display poor bench decorum or poor field conduct.
 - Enter any area behind the catcher while the opposing pitcher and catcher are in their positions; or
 - Act in an unsportsmanlike manner or exhibit behavior that is not in accordance with the spirit of fair play (i.e., maliciously running over a fielder, charging umpires or using profanity). *
 - Be outside the vicinity of the designated dugout (bench) or bullpen area if not a batter, runner, on-deck batter, in the coach's box or one of the nine players on defense.
 - Have any object in his or her possession in the coach's box other than scoring material.
 - Use and/or viewing of television monitoring or replay equipment for coaching purposes during the game.
- **Penalty:** In (A) and (I) the umpire shall issue a warning to the coach of the team of the player involved. In (I) for a subsequent violation the coach shall be ejected. In (A) all subsequent offenders on that team will be ejected. In (B) and (F)* (see below), the umpire shall eject the offender. For malicious contact, see 8-4-2n. Failure to comply shall result in the game being forfeited. However in (C),(D),(E),(G),and (H), if the offense is judged to be of a minor nature, the umpire may warn the offender and then eject her if she repeats the offense. For coaches who violate (D),(E),(F),(G), and (H), the umpire may: (1) restrict the offender to bench/dugout for the remainder of the game or; (2) eject the offender. If a head coach exhibits un-sportsmanship behavior he/she may be restricted to the dug out. During the time of period he/she is restricted, he may not leave the dugout except to address an injury.
 - If a head coach is sub-sequentially ejected during a regular season or tournament game, the game SHALL NOT BE forfeited if an eligible assistant coach (designated at the pre-game conference) is present. The ejected coach must leave the vicinity of the playing area and have no contact with the team. * According to the NHIAA By-Law Article IX, Sportsmanship, Section 6:

Sect. 6: Disqualification from an Interscholastic Athletic Event

- A. Any player who is disqualified before, during or after any sanctioned event and or scrimmage at the sub-varsity or varsity level, for exhibiting unsportsmanlike conduct, shall not participate in any scheduled interscholastic athletic event, including NHIAA tournament contests until the suspension is served in the sport at the level in which the disqualification occurred. Any coach who is disqualified before, during or after a game at the sub-varsity or varsity level, for exhibiting unsportsmanlike conduct, shall not participate in the next two scheduled interscholastic athletic event, including NHIAA tournament contests and **MUST** take the NFHS Teaching and Modeling Course for Disqualified Coaches **prior** to returning to coach in any capacity. Any player or coach who is disqualified from a game and participates in the next scheduled interscholastic athletic event(s), including NHIAA tournament contests, shall cause that school's game(s)/event(s) to be forfeited in the event of a win. In the event of loss (es), the matter will be referred to the Sportsmanship Committee for action. The school may request a hearing with the Executive Director and/or Sportsmanship Committee to explain the circumstances of the situation. The Executive Director, in consultation with the Sportsmanship Committee may modify the consequences. It is the coach's responsibility to promptly notify the school of any disqualification and the school must immediately impose the stated sanctions regardless of when formal notification is received from the NHIAA.
- B. A disqualified student athletes **must** view the "NFHS Sportsmanship" video on the NFHS website under the supervision of a school official prior to returning to game action. A certificate of completion must be filed with the athletic director and reported to the NHIAA.
- C. If any player or coach receives a second game disqualification during the season, that individual will be required to forfeit any participation in that interscholastic sport, at any level, for the balance of that season.
- D. Should an athlete disqualification occur in the final contest of that season (including tournament play), with no remaining scheduled games in that level/sport, the suspension shall be served at the next regular season or post season contest for that student athlete. If a disqualification is administered to a graduating senior in their final game for that school, it is the expectation that the school will take immediate and appropriate disciplinary action.
- E. Should a coach disqualification occur in the final contest of that season (including tournament play), with no remaining scheduled games in that level/sport, the suspension shall be served in the next two regular season or post season contest for that coach. If a disqualification is administered to a coach in their final game of coaching for that school, it is the expectation that the school will take immediate and appropriate disciplinary action.
- F. Any player who leaves the bench area during an interscholastic athletic event where an altercation is taking place in the playing area shall receive a one-game disqualification for the next scheduled game. If the infraction is not reported by the game official, it is the responsibility of the school administration to report and enforce the consequence.

11. Completed Schedule And Forfeit

All teams must complete their entire schedule submitted to the NHIAA. Games not played will result in a double forfeit. Extenuating circumstances may be appealed to the Executive Director and NHIAA Softball Committee, in writing, prior to the date of the NHIAA pairings. A team **CANNOT** forfeit a game to the other team under any circumstances.

Make-Up Games

Make-up games are to be scheduled on the next available date. Make-up games may not be scheduled into the last week of the season. The only games that can be played during the last week of the season, are games on the original schedules submitted to the NHIAA.

Exception to Reschedule into the Last Week of the Season: If for some reason, a game must be moved into the last week of the season a letter, prior to the game being played, must be submitted to and received by the Chair of the Committee through the NHIAA Executive Director by both schools outlining the reason(s) for the request.

Please note that any game approved to be moved into the last week of the season must be played by the last date to play. No extension of the season will be granted. In the event the game(s) are not played both teams may be issued forfeits.

12. **Verification of Schedule**

By **Monday, June 1, 2026**, each school in all divisions MUST have their FINAL TEAM RECORD Verification submitted to the NHIAA.

13. **Tournament Selection**

The maximum number of teams allowed per By-Law Article IV: Classification; Sect. 10: Tournament Selection Requirements will qualify for the girls tournament.

14. **Dugout Assignment At State Tournament**

The higher seeded team will have the choice of the 1st base or 3rd base dugout.

15. **Field Preparation Expenses**

The Softball Committee will only approve field preparation expenses when a tournament game is played at a neutral site.

16. **NHIAA Site Selection Criteria Policy**

NHIAA Sports Committees will make every effort to provide sites with the following criteria in mind.

The criteria are not listed in order of priority.

- a. If the home team cannot fulfill all criteria necessary to host a tournament game, including charging an admission fee for the preliminary or quarterfinal games, the school shall locate another site or forfeit the home site advantage.
- b. Health and safety of participants.
- c. Comfort and safety of spectators (including adequate seating and parking, and restrooms).
- d. Handicapped accessible for spectators.
- e. Relative travel requirements of participating schools.
- f. The ability to sell, collect and account for ticket sales.
- g. Playing surfaces must meet the requirements as established for that sport.
- h. Facility rental charge (if applicable).
- i. Sufficient parking.
- j. Other costs associated with running the event.
 - Public Safety – Approximate costs
 - Custodial
- k. Receptivity and cooperativeness of personnel working at site.
- l. Provide concessions (Facility keeps all sales).
- m. Provide area for NHIAA memorabilia sales.

17. **Tournament Event Postponements (Weather)**

If weather causes a tournament event postponement, the following guidelines must be followed:

- **Home Site Event** - Event moved to the next day, unless the “Sports” Committee and the Executive Director grant a waiver. The NHIAA must be notified if the home school makes a change. It shall be the responsibility of the home site Game Director to notify the game officials.
- **Neutral Site Event** - The NHIAA will make the decision to postpone and schools and game officials will be so notified in a timely manner.

18. **Fifty/Fifty (50/50) Raffles**

Fifty/Fifty drawings are permitted by the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA); at the site of an NHIAA member school hosting any round of an NHIAA tournament event (s). Fifty-fifty raffles will not be permitted at "neutral sites" that are not NHIAA Member School sites.

19. **Post-Game Ceremony**

At the end of each divisions championship game, both teams will line up on their respective baselines, facing the pitcher's mound. A representative of the NHIAA Softball Committee will present the championship and runner-up plaques and 23 medals to the coach and team captains of the respective champion and runner-up teams. Both teams must remain on the field throughout the presentation. *An announcement should be made during the 7th inning that "all spectators shall remain off the playing field after the completion of the game."

20. **Protest Procedure at State Tournaments**

During State Tournament play **AT NEUTRAL SITES**, there shall be no appeals of protests to the Executive Director. All protests shall be resolved at the game site at the time of the protest and the Protest Committee will be made up of a representative from the NHIAA Softball Committee and the officials involved in the game. During State Tournament Play at the home of the higher seed protests shall be resolved by consulting with the Rules Interpreter who will be available via phone during prefinal and quarterfinal contests.

21. **Blood Spillage And Body Fluids**

The NHIAA Sports Medicine Committee suggests that each school develop a local policy in cooperation with their local medical personnel, on how to handle blood spillage.

Housekeeping Procedures for Blood and Body Fluids

Disposable latex gloves should be worn to avoid contamination of the hands of the person cleaning spillages involving blood or other body fluids and secretions. Persons involved in cleaning contaminated surfaces should avoid exposure of open skin lesions or mucous membranes to blood or body fluids. A freshly prepared solution of dilute household bleach (one quarter cup of bleach diluted in one gallon of water) or other disinfectant labeled as *virucidal*, *Tuberculocidal*, *staphylocidal* is useful. Allow the disinfectant to stand wet for a minimum of one minute to start killing pathogens and disinfecting the area (10 minutes of disinfection time guarantees surface sterility). Whenever possible, disposable towels, tissues, and gloves should be used and properly discarded and mops should be rinsed in disinfectant.

Interpretation of Excessive Bleeding

National Federation Rules call for a player who is bleeding, has an open wound or excessive blood on the uniform, to leave the court/field.

The NHIAA interprets "excessive blood on the uniform" to mean that part of the uniform is saturated with blood. Saturated does not mean a wet spot. Saturated means a major portion of the garment is covered and soaked with blood. For this to occur, significant bleeding would have had to take place.

For any blood on uniform less than "saturated", the uniform does not have to be changed. School personnel have the responsibility of treating the blood area with the appropriate disinfecting solution before the athlete may participate. If the uniform is "saturated" with blood, the uniform must be changed before the athlete may participate. This interpretation is to be followed in the conduct of all NHIAA athletic events.

RE-ENTRY RULE pertaining to Blood Spillage

Any player that is asked to leave the game by an umpire, for the reason that is outlined in the Blood Spillage Policy, will not jeopardize their re-entry status. The umpire and coach will confer and confirm that the player will be able to re-enter when the problem is taken care of. The rule pertains to a starter as well as a substitute. (The

main reason for this modification is to insure the safety of the player and the interest of each team. It will also prevent long delays in the game to make sure that players don't lose their re-entry eligibility.)

22. Outdoor Environmental Safety

Lightning/Thunder:

Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect outdoor athletics. Within the United States, the National Severe Storm Laboratory (NSSL) estimates that 100 fatalities and 400-500 injuries requiring medical treatment occur from lightning strikes every year. The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can, and does, strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike. Additionally, thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment, and its distance from the observer.

The following guidelines are mandated:

- a. All athletic staff and game personnel are to monitor threatening weather. Establish a chain of command as to who makes the decision to remove a team or individual from athletic sites or events (athletic/site/event director, game officials/umpires, sports medicine staff?). An emergency plan should include planned instructions for participants as well as spectators.
- b. Be aware of potential thunderstorms that may form during scheduled athletic events or practices. Included here should include National Weather Service – issued (NWS) thunderstorm “watches” and “warnings” as well as signs of thunderstorms developing nearby. A “watch” means conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a “warning” means that severe weather has been reported in an area and for everyone to take proper precautions.
- c. Know where the closest “safe structure or location” is to the field or playing area, and know how long it takes to get to that safe structure or location.

Safe structure or location is defined as:

- Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and /or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using shower facilities for safe shelter and **do not use** the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm.
 - In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (not a convertible or golf cart) and rolled up windows can provide a measure of safety. A vehicle is certainly better than remaining outdoors. It is not the rubber tires that make a vehicle safe shelter, but the hard metal roof, which dissipates the lightning strike around the vehicle. **DO NOT TOUCH THE SIDES OF THE VEHICLE!**
- d. WHEN YOU FIRST HEAR THUNDER OR SEE LIGHTNING, SUSPEND ACTIVITIES AND GO TO A SAFE SHELTER OR LOCATION. **“IF YOU CAN SEE IT (LIGHTNING), FLEE IT (TAKE SHELTER). IF YOU CAN HEAR IT (THUNDER) CLEAR IT (SUSPEND ACTIVITIES).”** WAIT UNTIL 30 MINUTES AFTER THE LAST OBSERVED LIGHTNING OR THUNDER BEFORE RESUMING ACTIVITIES.
 - e. If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of the feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Minimize contact with the ground, because lightning current often enters a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike.
MINIMIZE YOUR BODY’S SURFACE AREA, AND MINIMIZE CONTACT WITH THE GROUND! DO NOT LIE FLAT! Stay away from the tallest trees or objects (such as light poles or flag poles), metal objects (such as bleachers or fences), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid being the highest object in a field. Do not take shelter under a single, tall tree.
 - f. All players/coaches must leave the playing area and go to a bus or secure building.

23. NHIAA Guidelines on Ozone Pollution and Physical Activity

School Administrators and coaches as well as other appropriate staff are to use this document in making decisions regarding indoor and outdoor activities during periods of high ozone pollution.

Charting Air Quality

Local officials use a simple scale to forecast and report on smog levels and other air pollution.

Depending on where you live, it might be called Air Quality Index (AQI) or Pollutant Standards Index (PSI).

Current air quality is reported as a percentage of the federal health standard for a pollutant. If the current index is above 100, air pollution exceeds the level considered safe.

At Ozone smog levels above 100, children, asthmatics and other sensitive groups should limit strenuous exercise. Even otherwise healthy people should consider limiting vigorous exercise when ozone levels are at or above the health standard.

If the index is above 200, corresponding to an ozone pollution level of .20 parts per million (ppm), the pollution level is judged unhealthy for everyone. At this level, air pollution is a serious health concern. Everyone should avoid strenuous outdoor activity, as respiratory tract irritation can occur.

U.S. EPA Air Quality Index

Index Value	Descriptor	Color	1 hr. Ozone ppb
0 – 50	Good	Green	---
51 – 100	Moderate	Yellow	---
101 – 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Orange	125 – 164
151 – 200	Unhealthy	Red	165 – 204
201 – 300	Very Unhealthy	Purple	205 – 404
301 – 500	Hazardous	Maroon	405 – 604

Observing Air Quality

1. Watch the Calendar

Ozone smog tends to be worst during the May – to – September “smog season.” Be especially conscious of smog levels during warm weather. In warm areas, smog can be a problem at any time of the year. Carbon monoxide pollution levels also are related to the weather, as well as to altitude. In the western U.S., the highest carbon monoxide levels are found in the winter months.

2. Watch the Clock

Since sunlight and time are necessary for ozone smog formation, the highest levels of ozone typically occur during the afternoon. Since carbon monoxide is produced primarily by motor vehicles, the highest carbon monoxide levels usually occur during rush hour or during other traffic congestion situations.

3. Watch the News

4. Check the Web (www.airnow.gov)

Guidelines for Participation

1. Observe appropriate physical activity restrictions represented above.

2. If an ozone exceedance is expected, but has not yet occurred at the time an interscholastic practice or contest is scheduled to begin, that event may begin as scheduled.

3. If an interscholastic practice or contest is scheduled to begin and an E.P.A. warning is in effect (PSI 201 or higher), the event shall be cancelled, delayed or rescheduled. When ozone levels reach a national PSI level of 201 (.201 parts per million), exercising indoors or outdoors may cause significant respiratory tract irritation and a decline in lung function. Therefore, strenuous exercise indoors and outdoors is to cease.

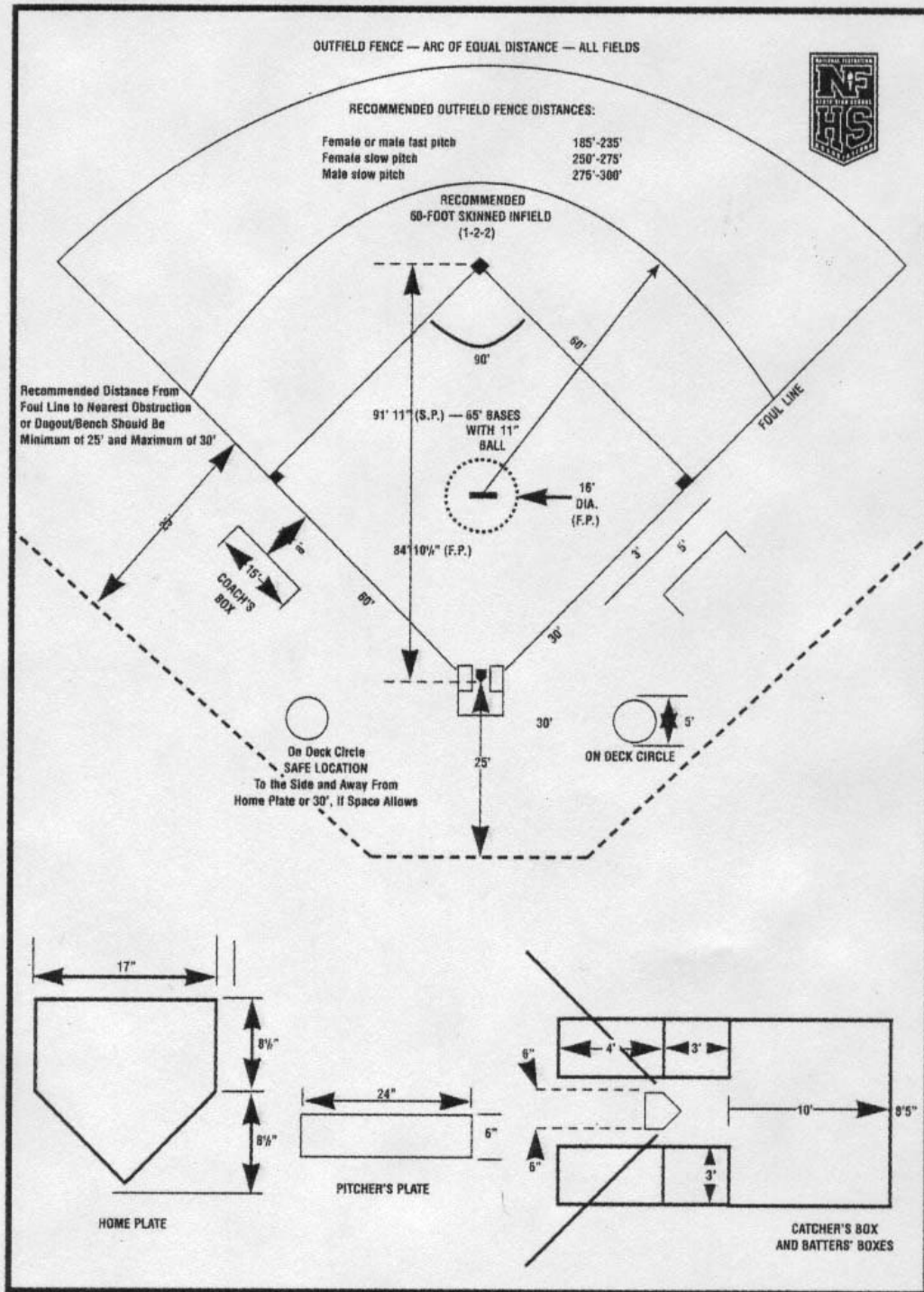
Recommended Restriction of Physical Activity

The following limits on activity for each type of episode are as follows:

- A. Level Orange, PSI 101-150 (Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups)
 - 1. Active children and adults and people with heart or respiratory disease, such as asthma or allergies, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.
 - 2. Healthy individuals with noticeable health effects associated with existing conditions should minimize outdoor activity.
- B. Level Red, PSI 151-200 (Unhealthy)
 - 1. All athletes should discontinue prolonged, vigorous exercise indoors and outdoors.
 - 2. Sensitive individuals, primarily children who are active outdoors and people with heart or respiratory disease such as asthma or allergies, should avoid indoor and outdoor activity.
 - 3. Indoor and outdoor activities that should be avoided include, but are not limited to, calisthenics, basketball, baseball, running, field hockey, soccer, football, tennis, swimming and diving.
- C. Level Purple, PSI 201-300 (Very Unhealthy)
 - 1. All athletes shall discontinue vigorous indoor and outdoor activities, regardless of duration.
 - 2. All indoor and outdoor physical education classes, sports practices and athletic competitions shall be rescheduled.

Note: Indoor practices may be held if an air-conditioned facility is available.

SOFTBALL



When laying out the softball diamond, it is recommended that the line from home plate through the pitcher's plate to second base run east-northeast.
 If a skinned infield is used, the area is determined by measuring a 60-foot arc from the front center of the 46-foot pitcher's plate, even if other pitching distances are used.

REQUIRED FIELD PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Common concerns pertaining to the field have been heard involving such items as failure to line the field properly, lack of manicuring, unsafe objects and the like.

The following is a Recommended Field Preparation Checklist for your convenience:

- _____ 1. Use a field line (powder or spray -a material which is not injurious to the eyes or skin and follow a drawn string line or carefully follow previous markings.
- _____ 2. Have proper lining of the batter's box.
- _____ 3. See that the pitcher's mound and home plate are properly set at 43 feet and lined up.
- _____ 4. Secure the bags in the proper positions.
- _____ 5. Line in the pitcher's circle [16 foot diameter]
- _____ 6. Line in coaches' boxes. [Note: the difference in the 3rd and 1st base lines is that there should be a line 3 ft. from the base line at 1st base.]
- _____ 7. Line in two 5 ft. diameter circles for the on deck batter's boxes.
- _____ 8. Line in safety or out-of-play lines around the players benches and backstop.
- _____ 9. See that all holes around home plate and infield are filled.
- _____ 10. See that each team has sufficient bench space.
- _____ 11. Check backstop and fences for holes and dangerous protruding objects.
- _____ 12. Be sure all sharp objects are removed from the field.
- _____ 13. An area must be designated for all media personnel in accordance with NFHS Rule 1-1-7

PLEASE GIVE A COPY TO YOUR FIELD PERSONNEL.