



2023-2024 MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Girls Softball Rules, Policies, and Bylaws

General Information

See [General Section](#) of the Athletic Rules & Policies Manual for information regarding the following:

- Athletic Directors Checklist
- Coach's Responsibility: Student Eligibility Checklist
- Multiple-Level Teams at Sub-Varsity Level
- Official Squad Size
- Revenue Sharing Plan
- Substitution in MSHSL Tournaments
- Weather Conditions (heat, cold, lightning)

See the MSHSL Official Handbook [Bylaw 501](#) for information regarding:

- Maximum Number of Contests

See the MSHSL Official Handbook [Bylaw 502](#) for information regarding:

- Daily and Season Player Participation Limitations

CONTEST RULES (Refer to [Bylaw 402](#)): Except as modified by the League, the National Federation of High School Association Track and Field rules for the current year shall be the official game rules for all interscholastic contests in which League members participate.

END OF SEASON (Refer to [Bylaw 411](#))

A. Student Participation on a Non-School Team While the Season is Still in Progress:

1. The season shall end when the student or the student's team has been eliminated from further participation in a League tournament series.
2. Students who have been eliminated from further participation in a League tournament series may participate as an individual or as a member of a non-school team in that sport.

B. School Team Practice and Competition:

The "end of season" shall be defined to be the last date of the state tournament in that sport.

1. Schools may continue to conduct practice and training for all squad members, including the students who have been eliminated from further individual competition in a League-sponsored series, until completion of the state tournament conducted by the League in that activity.
2. Dual contests may be scheduled after the start of the official League tournament series providing the school does not exceed the maximum number of games/matches/meets permitted in that activity.

- C. No school may engage in any meet or meets, practice, training or other activities between the end of the season and the opening of the next season.
- D. During the Summer Vacation Period (**Bylaw 208** Non-School Competition and Training—Team and Individual Sports) members of a high school team may participate on a non-school team and they may receive coaching or training from a salaried or non-salaried member of the student’s sophomore, B-squad, junior varsity or varsity high school coaching staff in that sport provided the school has approved a summer coaching waiver for the coach or coaches of that sport.

VIDEO TAPING ANOTHER SCHOOL'S GAME: It shall be an ethical violation to tape another school's game, meet or contest without their permission. Further it may be a violation of the laws governing copyrights. Each school owns the copyrights to their games, meets and contests. Taping another schools game without permission could constitute a violation of the copyright law.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPECTATOR CONDUCT

In order to elevate standards of sportsmanship and encourage the growth of responsible citizenship among the students, member schools, fans and school personnel, the MSHSL held a Sportsmanship Summit and asked student participants to identify behavior expectations they felt should be in place at every school event.

These minimum behavior expectations provide a foundation upon which member schools, conferences, administrative regions and the League’s Board of Directors can build specific guidelines for activities under their control.

MSHSL Bylaw 409, **RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATING TEAMS, STUDENTS AND SPECTATORS**, speaks to this issue, directly, and Bylaw 409-2 specifically states that, **“School officials shall be held responsible for the proper conduct of teams, team members, students and home spectators regardless of where the contest is being held.”**

In all MSHSL activities, each participating school shall designate a person or persons from that school to serve as crowd control supervisors or chaperones. MSHSL tournament staff may require school administrators to contact the tournament manager prior to the start of the tournament game so that they can be immediately contacted to respond to behavioral issues regarding their team members, students and/or spectators at the tournament site. Each supervisor or chaperone should be immediately identifiable to the students and to the tournament site ushers and other security personnel. This will help to coordinate crowd control between school supervisors and tournament site personnel. (8/9/05)

MSHSL MINIMAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR REGULAR AND POST-SEASON TOURNAMENT COMPETITIONS:

- Respect the American flag and the National Anthem.
- Spectators must wear clothing that covers the entire torso. Those who do not comply or who wear clothing that is vulgar, obscene or that in some other way inappropriate, as determined by school/tournament personnel, will be removed from the arena/stadium if they do not cooperate with this behavior expectation.

- The use of appropriate language is expected at all times. Profanity, negative chants, booing, trash talk, name calling, personal attacks or other acts of disrespect are unacceptable and must be immediately addressed by school and/or tournament administrators.
- Respect the game/contest. Under no condition shall anyone other than the members of the official squad enter the playing surface. No one may interfere with the contest in any way.
- Handheld signs, which do not obstruct the view of others, will be permitted provided they are in good taste. Signs, message boards, “white” boards or other similar items contest/tournament officials deem to be in poor taste will be removed.
- Artificial noise makers (i.e. megaphones, cowbells, sirens, whistles, thunder sticks, and other similar items) are not allowed.
- Laser lights are strictly prohibited.

THANK YOU for supporting your student athletes and fine arts participants and for providing a positive environment in which educational activities are conducted.

GIRLS SOFTBALL – Regular Season

See the MSHSL Official Handbook **Bylaw 515** for information regarding:

- Contests
- Last Date to Join a Team
- Practice Sessions Before First Contest Season Begins

CONTEST RULES REMINDERS

A. Bench and Field Conduct Rule Modification

Coaches, players or other team personnel must be in the dugout (bench area) or dead-ball territory (as defined by Rule 2, Section 22, Article 4) during the opponent’s infield practice prior to the start of each game. **Penalty:** The umpire shall warn the offender unless the offense is judged to be major, in which case an ejection shall occur. Any subsequent offense shall result in restriction to the dugout and/or ejection of the offender(s).

B. Pitching Distance: The pitching plate shall be set at 43-feet for interscholastic softball.

C. Batting helmets shall be equipped with a NOCSAE-approved face mask/guard and shall have a non-glare surface (not mirror-like).

D. Double First Base. The double-first base is required for all regular season (B-Squad, JV & Varsity) and post season games.

E. Helmets: Each batter, on-deck batter, students/players in coach's box, runners and retired runners must wear a batting helmet with a permanently affixed NOCSAE stamp. Any and all non-adult ball/bat shaggers are required to wear a batting helmet in live ball territory. Batting helmets must have a non-glare surface.

F. Bats: All bats must meet the 2004 ASA Bat Performance Standard bearing either the 2000 or 2004 certification mark and not be on the ASA non-approved list. Certified bats meeting this standard may be found at www.asasoftball.com.

G. Courtesy Runner Rule: The runner rule is in effect for interscholastic softball.

H. On-Deck Circle: All on-deck batters must use the on-deck circle that is located behind the batter.

- I. **10-Run Rule:** A game ends after 5 innings (4½), when a team is 10 or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat.
- J. **15-Run Rule:** A game ends after 4 innings (3½), when a team is 15 or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat. This is effective for regular and post-season play.

DEFINITION OF REGULATION GAME

It is a regulation game if: (a) five full innings have been played; or the home team at bat has scored an equal or greater number of runs in four or four-and-a-fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns at bat; or (b) play has gone beyond five 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 their half of the incomplete inning, scores a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, in which case, the final score shall be as recorded when the game is called.

NOTE: Games called are over if they are regulation, even if less than 7 innings have been completed.

SUSPENDED GAME RULE

A suspended game is any game that ends before it becomes a regulation game (at least 4.5 or 5 innings with each team having an equal number of completed turns at bat) or a regulation game that has a tie score when it is ended. If weather, darkness or similar issues interfere with play and the game is called (ended) by the umpire before it is a regulation game, the game will be suspended and continued from the point of suspension at a later time. The line-up and batting order of each team shall be exactly the same as the line-up and batting order at the point of suspension.

NOTE: The Suspended Game Rule is in effect for all regular season and post-season games (sub-section, section and state).

TIE REGULATION SEASON GAMES

Each year during regular season play some conference games, after going five full innings or more are called because of rain, darkness or other cause while the score is tied. According to the rule this is a tie game. Batting and fielding records are counted but the game is not counted in computing percentages of games won or lost. There is, however, by rule this choice; by conference adoption, a regulation called game with a tie score shall be counted as half game won and half game lost for each team.

TIME LIMIT/TIE-BREAKER

The League has adopted time limit/tie-breaker procedures for invitational tournaments only.

Time Limit Procedure: In invitational tournaments games may be played with a time limit as prescribe by the host tournament team. Under this rule no new inning will start after the prescribed time limit unless the game is tied. If a game is tied the ASA international tie-breaker rule will be used to determine a winning team. The host tournament team will decide in which inning the tie-breaker rule will be used.

Tie-Breaker Rule: In the event that the tie-breaker rule is used the following procedures shall apply: At the start of the inning in which the tie-breaker rule is used, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed on second base (e.g., if the number 5 batter is the led off batter, the number 4 batter in the batting order will be placed on second base).

The umpire and the scorekeeper will determine that the proper runner has been placed at second base and the inning shall begin.

MOUTHGUARDS

The use of mouthguards is strongly recommended. Mouthguards that have been cut down or modified in any manner are illegal equipment. Colored mouthguards are required for hockey. Any color mouthguard is permitted for all other sports, including transparent.

Softball Information – Post Season

ELIGIBILITY DURING LEAGUE-SPONSORED TOURNAMENT – SUBSECTION, SECTION AND STATE

Refer to Bylaw 206: A student must be fully eligible under all local school district policies, MSHSL Bylaws and Rules & Policies to be in uniform, occupy the bench or playing area, participate and receive individual and/or team awards, including all-tournament honors, in the awards ceremony.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN LEAGUE-SPONSORED TOURNAMENTS

Refer to Bylaw 405: A member school must schedule a minimum of three interscholastic varsity games, meets or matches to qualify for League-sponsored tournament participation in that sport.

CLASSES: The Girls' State Fast-Pitch Section and State Tournaments will be conducted in four classes - A, AA, AAA, and AAAA.

OFFICIAL BALL: Dudley SB12L **NOTE:** Game balls must be Optic Yellow

SECTION TOURNAMENT DOUBLE ELIMINATION FORMAT: Each section shall conduct a double elimination tournament for all final eight teams.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Tournament managers shall inform member schools of policies, procedures, dates, sites, and times of subsection/section games.

OFFICIAL SQUADS

The official squad for tournament participation is 18 players, 2 student managers and 3 coaches. The official squad may include less than 18 players (number who dress for games), but schools may not include additional student managers, coaches, or faculty representatives to reach the maximum for the official squad. Personnel in each dugout shall be limited to the members of the official squad plus one additional person either a coach or faculty rep.

COACHES: Coaches, when on the field, are required to be in team uniform or properly attired. Only one high school coach in uniform is permitted to occupy each coaching box.

AWARDS

Subsection

- Trophies: First and second place teams
- Medals: First and second place teams (20)

Section

- Trophies: First and second place teams
- Medals: First and second place teams (20)

State

- Trophies: First - fourth place teams, Consolation winners
- Medals: First and second place teams (20), coaches (3)
- Certificates of Participation: Official squad (20), coaches (3)

It is a violation of MSHSL policy for a member school or a representative of a member school to establish, distribute or accept any awards not provided by the MSHSL for section or state tournaments.

REGULATION GAMES IN STATE TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND GAMES

Quarterfinals, Semifinals and Championship

All quarterfinal, semifinal and championship games will be seven (7) innings (6.5 innings if the home team is ahead), unless: 1) the 10-run OR 15-run rule applies; or 2) extra innings are required because of a tie score. If a game is suspended before seven innings, the game will be continued at the point of suspension when conditions permit.

STATE TOURNAMENT QUALIFYING SCHOOL INFORMATION

Specific information for qualifying schools will be posted on the MSHSL website.

Pairings for All Classes: A seeding meeting to determine state tournament pairings will be held prior to the state tournament. The participating coaches will seed teams 1-5 in their respective tournament, and the remaining teams representing seeds 6-8 will be determined by a blind draw.

Brackets: All Classes

Upper Bracket

Seed #1 vs. Random Draw

Seed #4 vs. Seed #5

Lower Bracket

Seed #2 vs. Random Draw

Seed #3 vs. Random Draw