



2025 Softball Terms and Conditions

Changes and items of clarification from last school year to this school year are shaded.

I. SCHOOL CLASSIFICATION

- A. Seventh and eighth grade enrollment from the previous school year as reported to the IESA by the member schools through the IESA Member Center shall determine the classification of each school for girls' softball.
- B. The teams will be divided equally into three classes each containing 1/3 of the participating schools. The smallest 1/3 of the schools will be designated as Class 1A, the next smallest 1/3 will be designated as Class 2A, and the largest 1/3 of the schools will be designated as Class 3A. If two or more schools have the same enrollment number and that number happens to be where a split occurs, all schools with the same enrollment number shall be placed in the smaller class.

II. SEASON CALENDAR

Entry Deadline	June 9, 2025
Final Entry Deadline	July 1, 2025
Practice/Tryouts May Begin	July 28, 2025
Cooperative Agreement Due	July 30, 2025
Refund Deadline	August 1, 2025
Season Schedule Due and Games May Begin	August 6, 2025
Online Roster & Record Deadline	September 2, 2025
Online Ranking	September 3, 2025
Rosters Closed* <i>no changes permitted after this date and time</i>	September 8, 2025 @ 4:00 pm
Regionals	September 8, 2025 (qtr. finals) September 10 & 11, 2025 (semifinals) September 13, 2025 @ 11am (championship)
Sectionals	September 16, 2025 @ 4:30pm
State Finals	September 19 and 20, 2025
Season Must End	October 25, 2025

III. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS - ENTRY FEES, PENALTY FEES AND HOST EXPENSES

Entry Fees

1. Schools must pay the entry fee by the initial entry deadline.
2. Those entries postmarked after the initial entry deadline will be considered late and will be required to pay double fees and will only be accepted through a postmark date of the final entry deadline.
3. Late entry fees will be waived for schools designated as new members or for current member schools entering an activity for the first-time which petition to participate in an activity after the initial entry deadline.
4. Entry fees will be refunded only upon request prior to the refund entry deadline (Aug. 1).

Penalty Fees

1. Any school that withdraws from the state series without notifying the IESA office or withdraws from the state series after online ranking deadline shall pay a \$50.00 penalty, the cost of the umpires for the contest which they forfeited, and that school's share for one contest of any deficit assessment, and any other penalties (including monetary) as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director.

A. Host Financial Arrangements

1. Regionals, Sectionals

- a. Participating schools can be assessed on a per-game basis to cover operating deficits of a regional or sectional tournament. Host schools must contact the IESA for approval to assess prior to assessing other schools in the regional and/or sectionals.
- b. Any outside vendors besides concessions at state tournament events shall be contracted at least one month in advance through the IESA.
- c. All concession revenue may be kept by the host school.

2. State Finals

- a. Please log into your school member center to access the financial instructions and online forms. They are located inside the "Host Admin" tab within the Entry Center.
- b. Any outside vendors besides concessions at state tournament events shall be contracted at least one month in advance through the IESA.
- c. All concession revenue may be kept by the host school.

IV. ONLINE ROSTER, RECORD AND RANKING

A. Regional Entry Form

1. All information will be entered online - schools entering the Girls' Softball State Series must enter the following information online in the IESA member center by the online roster and record deadline. Teams shall be ruled ineligible to compete in any state series contest unless the regional entry form has been completed; penalties will be enforced if the regional entry form information and roster/record is not submitted by the posted deadline.
2. Schools are required to submit their season schedule in the softball entry center by the date listed in section II of these Terms and Conditions.
3. Schools that fail to submit their season results by the online roster/record deadline will not be allowed to seed the other teams within their regional but the teams in that regional will be allowed to seed the team(s) who fail to list season results.
4. The school/team personnel information entered on the regional entry form is what will be used for free entries into the state finals should a school advance to that level.
 - a. The IESA pass cards are intended for use by the school administration (superintendent, principal, assistant principal, athletic director). School administrators who wish to have a guest accompany them at the state finals must present the IESA pass card at the ticket gate to allow the guest free entry.
5. Schools will be asked to submit the coach's name and email address; doing this certifies that each student on the roster has a birth certificate on file and that she meets the eligibility guidelines as put forth by the IESA. It is the ultimate responsibility of all competing teams for all athletic activities to ensure that each participant listed on its regional entry form is eligible.
6. Changes, additions, and/or substitutions may be made to the regional entry form information until 4:00 pm on the date listed as the "Roster Closed" deadline of the season calendar in Section II of these Terms and Conditions. No roster changes are permitted after this deadline.

7. Components of the Regional Entry Form include:
 - a. **Athletes - schools may list up to 18 uniformed players for the State Series.**
 - b. Regular Season Contests
 - Submit the full varsity season schedule with results.
 - Non-varsity contests do not count as part of the team record.
 - A forfeit counts as a game played and the score should be entered as 7-0.
 - The team record will automatically be tabulated by the season schedule and results entered.
 - c. Special Comments – any additional notes schools should consider when ranking.

B. Online Ranking

1. A school that has not completed any of the online seeding procedure steps has no say regarding seed. It is that school's responsibility to enter the appropriate material online by the deadline.
2. After the online roster and record deadline, schools will have one day to rank all participating schools in their regional based on the information each team submitted. The following are factors to consider when ranking other teams in the regional:
 - a. Season record and quality of teams' competition
 - b. Smaller schools competing against larger schools (i.e. 1A vs. 2A)
 - c. Head-to-head competition with common opponents
 - d. Record against common opponents
 - e. Roster of post-season team
3. The votes will be tabulated, and the IESA will view all ranking results, break any ties, and confirm seed results online - if two or more teams are tied for any seed, the IESA administrator will break the tie by a coin flip.
4. All schools in each regional will be able to see how other schools in the regional ranked them.

V. STUDENT AND COACH ELIGIBILITY

- A. A student must be eligible under all of the eligibility rules and conditions of competition of the IESA. These rules and conditions are outlined in Sections 2-5 of the IESA Handbook and include but are not limited to:
 1. Scholastic Standing - IESA By-Law 2.040
 2. Residence and Transfer - IESA By-Laws 2.050 and 2.060
 3. Participation Limitations - IESA By-Law 3.040
 4. Age Qualifications - IESA By-Law 3.050
 5. Physical Examination - IESA By-Law 3.060
 6. Amateurism - IESA By-Law 3.070
 7. Participating Under an Assumed Name - IESA By-Law 3.080
 8. All-Star Participation - IESA By-Law 3.100
 9. Penalty for Violating Rules – IESA By-Law 5.100
- B. To serve as a head coach, assistant coach, unpaid volunteer coach, and/or serve in any coaching capacity, the individual must meet the IESA requirements outlined in IESA By-Law 2.110.

VI. STATE SERIES FORMAT

- A. **Levels of Play, Home Team Designation and Warm-Ups**
 1. The IESA Softball State Series is defined as Regionals, Sectionals, and the State Finals.
 2. Regionals and Sectionals are single elimination contests.
 3. **In all state series level play, each team will receive a 10-minute pre-game team defensive warm-up time on the playing diamond.** Arrangements and administration of

these warm-ups will be made by the regional and sectional host schools.

4. The Regional and Sectional host schools will:
 - Review the IESA Softball Host Manual - available online.
 - Assign dugouts prior to play and communicate this with teams.
 - Make their facility available to the visiting teams ONLY for the customary scheduled batting practice and infield before game time.
 - Display signage in accordance with the Concealed Carry Act 430 ILCS 66. This includes an IESA event that is held on school property or IESA events held off-site, such as at a community park.

5. **Regionals** - each class will have teams assigned to one of sixteen regional tournaments.
 - a. Regional tournaments will be held at sites designated by the IESA office and must follow the dates outlined in Section II of these Terms and Conditions.
 - b. **The higher-seeded team will host the quarterfinal game unless both schools mutually agree to switch sites.** The semifinals and finals will be played at the site determined by the host school as designated by IESA as the overall regional host. The regional quarterfinal hosts and the IESA-designated regional hosts set the playing times; however, regional games that are played on fields without lights cannot start any later than 5:00 pm.
 - c. **In regionals, the higher-seeded team is automatically the home team even if the game is held somewhere other than the higher-seeded team's traditional home field.**
 - d. Regional hosts shall update the scores for each round online by 9:00 am of the following school day.

6. **Sectionals** - the winners of the regional tournaments in each class will advance to sectionals.
 - a. **In sectional play, the odd-numbered regional will call the coin flip to determine who will be the home team.**
 - b. When a sectional site is undetermined, the two regional winners shall make contact, determine the sectional site, and notify the IESA as soon as possible.
 - c. If no school offers to host a sectional, the regional winners for those unset sectionals will be determined with a coin flip conducted by the IESA. If both regional winners desire to host the sectional, a coin flip will be conducted by the IESA to determine who will host.
 - d. Sectional host schools shall update the score for the sectional game immediately following the conclusion of the game.

7. **State Finals** - the winners of the sectionals in each class will advance to the state finals.
 - a. At the State Finals, the home team shall be determined by a coin flip. At the State Finals, the visiting team will take infield warm-up first.
 - b. The IESA Softball Advisory Committee randomly draws the pairings for the Class 1A, 2A and 3A state finals at its fall meeting. The time schedule and pairings are as follows:

Class 1A Pairings

Friday, September 19 (Quarterfinals)

Game 1	9:30 am	Sectional H vs. Sectional E
Game 2	11:30 am	Sectional C vs. Sectional D
Game 3	1:30 pm	Sectional B vs. Sectional F
Game 4	3:30 pm	Sectional A vs. Sectional G

Saturday, September 20 (Semifinals & Finals)

Game 5	9:30 am	Winners of Games 1 and 2
Game 6	11:30 am	Winners of Games 3 and 4
Game 7	1:30 pm	Losers of Games 5 and 6 (<i>Third Place</i>)
Game 8	3:30 pm	Winners of Games 5 and 6 (<i>Championship</i>)

Class 2A Pairings

Friday, September 19 (Quarterfinals)

Game 1	10:00 am	Sectional G vs. Sectional C
Game 2	12:00 noon	Sectional E vs. Sectional F
Game 3	2:00 pm	Sectional D vs. Sectional H
Game 4	4:00 pm	Sectional B vs. Sectional A

Saturday, September 20 (Semifinals & Finals)

Game 5	10:00 am	Winners of Games 1 and 2
Game 6	12:00 noon	Winners of Games 3 and 4
Game 7	2:00 pm	Losers of Games 5 and 6 (<i>Third Place</i>)
Game 8	4:00 pm	Winners of Games 5 and 6 (<i>Championship</i>)

Class 3A Pairings

Friday, September 19 (Quarterfinals)

Game 1	10:30 am	Sectional D vs. Sectional H
Game 2	12:30 pm	Sectional E vs. Sectional F
Game 3	2:30 pm	Sectional G vs. Sectional A
Game 4	4:30 pm	Sectional B vs. Sectional C

Saturday, September 20 (Semifinals & Finals)

Game 5	10:30 am	Winners of Games 1 and 2
Game 6	12:30 pm	Winners of Games 3 and 4
Game 7	2:30 pm	Losers of Games 5 and 6 (<i>Third Place</i>)
Game 8	4:30 pm	Winners of Games 5 and 6 (<i>Championship</i>)

B. Weather and Game Postponements

1. No State Series contest shall be forfeited due to weather conditions.
2. If the administrator of any participating school determines he or she cannot reach the tournament site due to weather conditions, the host school shall reschedule that particular game as soon as possible.
3. The IESA and the opposing schools shall be notified of the rescheduling. Other contests scheduled on that particular date may still be held.
4. The following steps will be used if a game or games are not completed by the start of the state finals:
 - a. If weather conditions persist at the regional or sectional facility, the IESA may elect to designate an alternative field to complete play.
 - b. If it is not possible to move the playing field and the games have not been played prior to the start of state play, then the higher seed will advance.
 - c. If the teams remaining have the same seed, a coin flip will be performed by the IESA between the two teams on the Thursday prior to the start of State Finals play Friday.

VII. IESA POLICIES AND SOFTBALL COMPETITION RULES

A. Authority

1. The current NFHS Softball Rules Book is adopted as the official rules of play for the state series with exceptions listed below and in Section 4.024 of the IESA Handbook.
2. By authority of the IESA Constitution and by-laws, the Board of Directors shall interpret and enforce the Terms and Conditions.
3. Schools hosting IESA State Series contests who do not uphold the by-laws governing the

conduct of those contests may be subject to sanctions as determined by the Executive Director.

B. IESA Exceptions to NFHS Softball Rules

1. For regular season play only, no inning shall start 2 hours after the first pitch of the game. Any inning in progress shall be completed. If teams are tied after the time limit has been reached, it shall be considered a tie game. The home plate umpire will keep the time. [4-2-2] The 10-run, 12-run and 15-run rules are still in effect.
2. The 10-run rule is in effect and the game shall end when the visiting team is behind 10 runs or more after 4 ½ innings, or after the 5th inning, if either team is 10 runs behind and both teams have had an equal number of times at bat. A 12-run rule is in effect and the game shall end when the visiting team is behind 12 runs or more after 3 ½ innings, or after the 4th inning, if either team is 12 runs behind and both teams have had an equal number of times at bat. A 15-run rule is also in effect and the game shall end when the visiting team is behind 15 runs or more after 2 ½ innings, or after the 3rd inning, if either team is 15 runs behind and both teams have had an equal number of times at bat. [2-26-2, 4-2-3]
3. The use of Safe-Base, or a manufactured reproduction thereof, shall be mandatory in all regular season and tournament play. No game shall be played unless the Safe-Base is in use. The application of the Safe-Base rule shall follow NFHS guidelines. [1-2-1]
4. Adult coaches are not required to be in the uniform of the team, but it is recommended that coaches be attired in school colors. [3-5-3]
5. Any state series game that is suspended for reasons of weather, darkness, or mechanical failure (i.e. lighting problems, power outage, water system problems) will be treated as a suspended game and continued from the point of suspension when the game is able to resume provided it is not a completed regulation game. The coach of the team trailing at the time of the suspension may forfeit the contest at which time the game will be considered a complete game. [4-2-2; 4-2-3]
6. When a regular season game is stopped for any reason, the school administration of the participating schools may choose to do one of the following:
 - a. suspend the game and mutually agree to resume the game at the point of suspension at a later date and time; or
 - b. the team losing at the time of the suspension can forfeit and the team winning at this time would claim this as a win on their record; or
 - c. the team winning at the time of the suspension can forfeit and thus the team losing at this time would claim this as a win on their record; or
 - d. the schools mutually agree to record the game as a "no game." [4-2-3]
7. The pitching distance shall be set at 40 ft. [1-1-2 b]
8. The international tie breaker rule may be used any time after the 7th inning upon agreement of both coaches prior to the start of the contest. The international tie breaker rule will not be used in the state series. If used in a regular season contest, the following tiebreaker rules shall be in effect:
 - a. The last batter from the previous inning is placed on 2nd base and play then continues under regular rules;
 - b. It is not sudden death;
 - c. Each team has the opportunity to bat each inning;
 - d. The game is over when one team has the lead at the end of an inning. [4-2-5]
9. First and last names must be included on the line-up card presented to the umpire prior to the start of the contest. [3-1-3]
10. The on-deck batter may use either on-deck circle. The on-deck batter may only take their position during a dead-ball. [2-5-3, 7-5]

C. Season Limitations

1. No member school participating in the Girls' Softball State Tournament Series shall organize; hold tryouts or practice prior to Monday of Week 4 in the IESA standardized calendar.
2. A member school may conduct its first interscholastic contest in girls' softball no earlier than Wednesday of Week 5, and its last interscholastic contest no later than Saturday of Week 16 in the IESA standardized calendar.
3. While there is not a maximum number of contests school may participate in, **only schools with an established school team which has participated in at least three (3) interscholastic contests prior to the online roster and record deadline during the current season may participate in the IESA State Series.**

D. Team Limitations

1. **Each State Series team shall consist of a maximum of 18 uniformed girls whose names appear on the school's regional entry form.**
2. All tournament play shall be single elimination with the winning opponent advancing from regional to sectional and from sectional to state level competition. If an opponent incurs a violation in the state series that requires a contest or contests to be forfeited, the following policy will be followed:
 - a. If the violation affects only one round of competition, the opponent within that round will advance on to the next round of competition within the state tournament series.
 - b. If the violation affects more than one round of competition, no opponent from the preceding rounds of competition shall be advanced to the next round of competition within the state tournament series.
 - c. The advancement of opponents shall be determined by the IESA.

E. Failure to Appear and Forfeiture of Contest

1. A team failing to field the required number of starting players (9) within thirty (30) minutes of the scheduled game time shall forfeit the game. The IESA office and tournament host school must be notified of such a decision. A game that is played even though the school failed to field the required number of starters within thirty (30) minutes of the scheduled game time cannot be protested for that reason.
2. Any coach or school official who withdraws a team from the field of play under any circumstances prior to the official completion of the game shall forfeit all rights to protest, except when the principal of the forfeiting school believes circumstances which affected the health, safety, or welfare of the students required such action, he or she may file a protest.

F. Softballs

1. Each IESA-designated Regional and Sectional host will receive Rawlings softballs (model #RIESASB) to be used in the respective tournament. There will be enough for two (2) softballs per regional semifinal, regional championship and sectional contest scheduled; however, host schools must have some identical balls on hand in case the 2 balls are not enough to complete the game.
 - a. For the regional quarterfinal game, the higher-seeded team in each regional quarterfinal game will be sent the regulation softballs after brackets are posted. These should be brought to and used in the quarterfinal game. The intention is that the softballs will have arrived at the higher-seeded team's school prior to the first regional game, but if they have not yet arrived, regional quarterfinal hosts shall have the appropriate number of softballs on hand.

G. Ticket Gate Admission

1. **No admissions will be charged at Regional and Sectional contests.**
2. Tickets for the IESA State Softball Finals will be available for purchase through the GoFan platform or cash at the gate.
3. Admission prices for the state finals are as follows: (children 5 and under are free).

FRIDAY

GoFan: \$8.00 per person
Cash: \$10.00 per person

SATURDAY

GoFan: \$8.00 per person
Cash: \$10.00 per person

H. Awards

1. Plaques will be awarded to the Regional and Sectional winners.
2. Trophies will be awarded to the Champion, Runner-up, Third and Fourth place winners for all classes at the state finals along with (26) individual medallions to the first, second, third, and fourth place team winners in the state finals.

VIII. OFFICIALS

A. Licensed Officials

1. Two IHSA-licensed officials shall be hired for all regular season games.
2. A school's first violation for hiring a non-licensed official will result in a written warning. With a second violation, the Executive Director shall have the full authority to determine and impose a monetary penalty equivalent to the cost of one regional official for the athletic activity.
3. A pregame conference with officials and both teams' head coach is required to take place prior to all contests.

B. Regionals, Sectionals and State Finals

1. **For the regional quarterfinal game, the higher-seeded team is the home team, and this school will be responsible for contracting and hiring two (2) IHSA-licensed officials for the regional quarterfinal game(s), the costs of which are to be split by the schools participating in each of those games. Regional officials are paid \$65 each per game.**
2. The Regional host designated by the IESA will contract and hire two (2) IHSA-licensed officials for both the regional semifinal and the regional championship game, the costs of which are to be split by the schools participating in each of those individual games.
3. The IESA office will secure, hire, and pay \$75 each to two (2) IHSA-licensed officials for each Sectional game.
4. The IESA office will secure, hire, and pay \$85 each to three (3) IHSA-licensed officials for each State Finals game.