

CIF SOUTHERN SECTION | SOFTBALL



# PLAYOFF BULLETIN



2025 - 2026



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The Southern California Ford Dealers proudly support SoCal High School Athletics.





With the 2026 Southern Section CIF Softball Championship Playoffs approaching, this bulletin is designed to assist you with your organizational plans. Please review this bulletin, and after reviewing its contents if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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### **PLAYOFF DATES**

**Brackets for all divisions will be released on  
Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00 a.m. on the CIF website ([www.cifss.org](http://www.cifss.org)).**

First Round                      Thursday, May 14 & Friday, May 15, 2026

Second Round                    Saturday, May 16, 2026

Quarterfinal Round            Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Semifinal Round                Saturday, May 23, 2026

**Championship Finals      Thursday, May 28, Friday, May 29 & Saturday, May 30, 2026  
DEANNA MANNING STADIUM @ Colonel Bill Barber Marine Corps Memorial Park, Irvine**

**Specific date, time and locations for each divisional final game will be posted  
on Tuesday, May 26 no later than 10:00 a.m. on the CIF website ([www.cifss.org](http://www.cifss.org)).**

## CIFSSHOME REQUIREMENTS

**SCHEDULES & SCORES** Complete your schedule in CIFSSHome prior to your season as well as update scores following each contest  
Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches: It is very important that you enter your entire season schedule into CIFSSHOME ([www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org)) as well as update the scores immediately following your contests.

Log in @ [www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org) (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director). Once you are logged in:

-On the left panel, click on "Teams", select "Softball"

To Add a game:

- On the left panel, click on "Events", select "Add Event", choose Game under "Event Type", choose date of game under "Event Date", choose **SOFTBALL** under "Sport", choose Varsity under "Level", type the opposing school name in "Add Opponent", choose the type of game under "Select Game Type", click on Home, Away or Neutral under "Location", choose "Start Time"  
Click on "Save" to add one game or "Save & Duplicate" for multiple games.

- To Submit your score:


- On the left panel, click on "Teams", select "Teams Manager", scroll down to **SOFTBALL**, and click on VR to add Varsity scores. Click on "Post Result" button, enter your team's score, enter the opponent's score, result should auto populate with either "W", "L" or "T" based on the correct match score entered. If the game was a forfeit, click on the Yes box, enter the set scores in "Notes".

Make sure that your overall and team records are correct on your team page

### VARSITY COACHES

**Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches:** It is very important that you enter your **SOFTBALL** coaches (Head & Assistants) into CIFSSHome ([www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org)) no later than **THURSDAY, APRIL 23**.


Log in @ [www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org) (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

- Click on the "Users" tab, click on "User Manager", click on  in the upper right-hand corner to add Coaches and Assistant Coaches. Enter the information requested on the "Add School User" page. Choose "Active" to provide the coach with access to CIFSSHome or "Inactive" for directory purposes only. Choose Yes or No to give the coach access to all sport, click Submit. Choose the applicable options on the Assign Coach to Team page, click Save or Add Another to add additional coach(s).

### VARSITY TEAM INFORMATION (TEAM PHOTO)

**Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches:** It is very important that you enter your entire **SOFTBALL** Varsity roster into CIFSSHome ([www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org)) no later than **MONDAY, APRIL 6**.


Log in @ [www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org) (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

- Click on the "Teams" tab, click "Teams Manager", click on "Softball", click on the "Team Photo" tab, Click on the  under "TEAM PICTURE", choose the file, click Submit.

### VARSITY TEAM INFORMATION (ROSTERS)

**Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches:** It is very important that you enter your entire **SOFTBALL** Varsity roster into CIFSSHome ([www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org)) no later than **THURSDAY, APRIL 23**.


Log in @ [www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org) (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

- Click on the "Teams" tab, click on "Teams Manager", click on "Softball", select   
You can **UPLOAD** your roster using the instructions below (1) or you can enter each player one by one (2).

Required roster information for **SOFTBALL** is:

First Name, Last Name, Birth date, Year, Number, Position & Eligibility

(1) To **ADD** roster players one by one:

- Click  on and complete fields required for **SOFTBALL**.

(2) To Import a Roster using an Excel sample file:

- Download the [sample file](#) and delete the "contents only".

- Copy and paste or type your roster information into the file as the contents and save the file to your computer.


- Only an excel file (xls) can be uploaded that is the exact same format as the sample file.

- Columns for information not required for your sport may be left blank, but the **HEADER INFORMATION MUST REMAIN EXACTLY AS THE SAMPLE**.

- Required Columns for **SOFTBALL** are:

First Name, Last Name, Birth date, Year, Number, Position & Eligibility

Import

- Click on to find your file, then click on
- To confirm the roster has been uploaded, your players' names will be uploaded in the "Official Roster" section.
- Click on the 

### **SCHOOL LOGO**

Log in @ [www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org)

- Click on the "Configuration" tab
- Click on "School Info"
- Click on "Choose File" (.PNG file format is preferred)
- Choose the "No" option for Hide from Directory?
- Click Save

### **SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS**

Log in @ [www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org)

- Click on the "Configuration" tab
- Enter all school account names available next to the social media options (ie. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- These accounts are used during playoffs and for Games of the Week

Choose File

MANTRA  
REVERSE

Jocelyn Alo  
JOCELYN ALO

MANTRA  
REVERSE

PERFORMANCE COMES WITH HARD WORK,  
UNYIELDING DRIVE, AND A STRONG MANTRA.  
BUT SOMETIMES YOU NEED TO REVERSE  
YOUR MINDSET.

INTRODUCING THE ALL-NEW MANTRA REVERSE  
SOFTBALL BAT FROM RAWLINGS. THIS  
TWO-PIECE BAT IS REVERSE ENGINEERED WITH  
AN INNER BARREL THAT'S INVERTED AND  
SEPARATED FROM THE OUTER BARREL. THE  
RESULTING SPACE BETWEEN THE TWO BARRELS  
YIELDS MORE CONSISTENT FLEX THROUGHOUT  
THE ENTIRETY OF THE BARREL, CREATING  
OPTIMAL TRAMPOLINE AND POWER. ITS LIGHT,  
EVENLY DISTRIBUTED SWING WEIGHT AND  
PREMIUM IN/TENSE CARBON COMPOSITE  
CONSTRUCTION, ENSURE THE MANTRA REVERSE  
DELIVERS EXPLOSIVE POP AT THE PLATE.

REVERSE YOUR MINDSET AND  
REIGNITE YOUR OFFENSE!

OFFICIAL SOFTBALL OF THE



RAWLINGS.COM

# PLAYOFF INFORMATION

## GAME TIMES

All playoff games are scheduled for **3:15 p.m.**

When schools must travel extensive distances for a playoff game, it is recommended that the teams mutually agree to an earlier start time.

See page # for how to proceed if a game time / date / location must be changed. It is recommended that you notify your potential next round opponent should you mutually agree to change the time or date of a contest.

## PLAYOFF TICKETS

Admission will **not** be required during playoff rounds leading to the Championship Final.

### **Championship Finals Ticket Pricing:**

**Child (5-13)/Student with proper high school I.D.      \$TBD**  
**General Admission/Student without high school I.D.    \$TBD**

All ticket sales will be conducted through our digital ticketing partner GoFan once the links are created at [www.gofan.co](http://www.gofan.co).

## PRE-FLIPS / RELEASE SCHEDULE

For ALL rounds, we will be conducting pre-flips to give the teams involved immediate notice of their next game location. The playoff pairings will be released on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:00a.m. and the draw will indicate home and away teams.

Pre-flips will be available on the web at [www.cifss.org](http://www.cifss.org) under the Softball sports page [www.cifss.org/sports/softball](http://www.cifss.org/sports/softball), after the conclusion of the wild card round, on the date of the coin flip by 11:00 a.m.

The coin flips schedule for games played on the following dates is listed below:

<b>2<sup>nd</sup> ROUND:</b>	Saturday, May 16	<b>COIN FLIP DATE:</b> Monday, May 11
<b>QTR-FINALS:</b>	Wednesday, May 20	<b>COIN FLIP DATE:</b> Friday, May 15
<b>SEMI-FINALS:</b>	Saturday, May 23	<b>COIN FLIP DATE:</b> Monday, May 18
<b>FINALS:</b>	Thursday, May 28, Friday, May 29 or Saturday, May 30	<b>COIN FLIP DATE:</b> Tuesday, May 27

## RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS

One designated representative of each school qualifying for the 2025-2026 CIF Southern Section Softball Playoffs is to check the website in accordance with the release schedule:

<https://cifss.org/sports/softball/brackets/>

An official school representative of EACH school **MUST** enter their score into [www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org) IMMEDIATELY after each playoff contest.

## PLAYOFF ENTRY AND FORMAT

### DIVISIONS

The 2025-2026 CIF Southern Section Softball Playoffs will be conducted in the following divisions: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

### PLAYOFF ENTRIES

All 4-team leagues will be guaranteed two entries into the playoffs.

All 5-6 team leagues will be guaranteed three entries into the playoffs.

All 7-8 team leagues will be guaranteed four entries into the playoffs.

All 9 or more team leagues will be guaranteed five entries.

Under the playoff format in all sports, leagues have the responsibility of developing and identifying the priority for their representatives into the playoffs as so noted under Article 3500 (Playoffs) of the CIF Southern Section Blue Book. Please note that leagues may not conduct additional contests beyond the prescribed limits unless said contests are to determine ENTRY and not representative priority (leagues must have this as part of their constitution and must secure permission from the CIF-SS office before conducting such playoffs for entry). If a league includes such conditions in its constitution, it is still obligated to play said contest on or before the last specified allowable playing date (WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026).

### DETERMINATION OF PLAYOFF DIVISIONS/PAIRINGS

With the passage of the new competitive equity playoff system (CIFSS Council, January 2024), and changes to Bylaws 3519 and 3520, the way we group playoff divisions has changed. Playoff divisions will be created at the end of the regular season based on a team's current win/loss data. It is imperative that coaches/athletic directors enter their full schedule, and score results consistently throughout the season.

**Member schools who fail to accurately enter/complete regular season results into CIFSSHome will not be placed into a playoff division and will be ineligible to participate in the Southern Section Championship Playoff Tournament.** Please review your results carefully, entering actual tournament opponents played, correct dates the contest was played, and the game scores. Please look through your schedule and scores on CIFSSHome (not another platform) as all data retrieval will be from CIFSSHome. Massey Ratings, the same power ranking system the CIFSS has used in various sports since 2014, will be used.

PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL SCHEDULES AND SCORES  
ARE COMPLETED BY WEDNESDAY, MAY 6<sup>th</sup>.

Last League and Contest Date: Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>  
NO GAMES MAY BE PLAYED AFTER THIS DATE

It will be the responsibility of the Commissioner, and his staff to establish the pairings in each first round game for all divisions. Playoff groupings will be created using an average of the total number of automatic qualifiers across all the divisions. **Each division will start with an automatic qualifier** and include all teams until the automatic qualifier which begins the next division. Once Automatic Qualifiers have been placed into a division, any remaining spots will go to the highest ranked, .500 or better at large teams in that grouping that have submitted an at large application. The ranking of each team will be determined by a schools rating at a designated time on **Thursday May 7, 2026.**

**Important information to be considered regarding the formation of the 2025 playoff divisions:**

1. Rankings for all teams will be determined at a designated time on **Thursday May 7, 2026.**

Rankings will be taken using the Massey Reporting system. As the rankings are dynamic, only these rankings, from that moment will be used. Massey rounds to the nearest 10<sup>th</sup> in posting their rankings, however teams that are tied in rating, will have their strength of schedule used to break an exact matching power ranking value.

2. After all teams have been placed into division one, the next available automatic qualifier and all remaining teams after that will make brackets to form divisions 2-8.
3. An average of automatic qualifiers will be used to place teams into divisions. It is an average, with some divisions having more, and some less than the average depending on the order of automatic qualifiers and number of at-large teams in a grouping of teams. There are currently **231** automatic qualifiers for the 2026 season. (This number is subject to change based on participation of all teams during the league portion of our season).
4. Once automatic qualifiers have been placed into a division, and pending space, any remaining spots will go to the highest ranked, .500 overall record or better at-large teams in that grouping. **A team MUST be .500 or better to qualify for the playoffs regardless of their power ranking.**

### **AT LARGE ENTRIES**

At Large entries **must** be submitted by the school no later than **9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6** in CIFSSHome ([www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org)).

### **FREELANCE**

Freelance schools are reminded that in order to be considered for post-season competition, they **must** complete a freelance petition in CIFSSHome ([www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org)) prior to the start of the season. CIF Blue Book bylaw 3510: A freelance school must schedule 80% of the allowable contests at the varsity level. In order to be considered for the playoffs, the school must have a .500 or better record in all contests played and there must be openings in the bracket. Additionally, teams that win 80% of their contests played will be guaranteed entry. Freelance schools should use the At-Large Entry submission through [www.cifsshome.org](http://www.cifsshome.org) for consideration into the playoffs.

### **OFFICIAL GAME BALL**

The home team provides the game balls per National Federation Rules. The Rawlings FPCIF-SS will be the game ball for the Southern Section Championship Finals. The ball must have the NFHS stamp along with the COR and compression mark.





# Official Softball



OFFICIAL BALL  
 Rawlings  
 FPCIF-SS  
*\*This ball will be provided for the championship final game*



APPROVED FOR PLAY  
 Rawlings  
 DREAM SEAM



APPROVED FOR PLAY  
 Rawlings  
 RED DOT

*\*The official ball rule is mandatory for all CIF-SS playoff rounds.*

*Contracted through: June 30, 2026*

**Official Ball Rule:**

Should a school fail to provide the correct game ball, the game will always be played. Teams/schools failing to utilize the correct official ball in CIF-SS playoffs will be reported by officials to CIF-SS and will not be allowed to host their next available home playoff game. Penalty will carry over to the next season if not enforceable this season due to elimination.

## PLAYOFF HOSTING INFORMATION

### DETERMINATION OF SITES FOR ALL PLAYOFF ROUNDS AND FINALS

To decide who shall be the host team **AFTER** the first round of competition will be the sole responsibility of the Commissioner. In cases where two teams are paired after the first round of the playoffs, the team having the fewest number of host games in playoff competition shall be designated as the host team. When both teams have had an equal number of host playoff contests, the Commissioner shall toss a coin to decide the host team. When a school has been designated as the host school for a playoff contest it shall (1) act in that capacity unless excused by the Commissioner, and (2) be considered the host team regardless of where the game is being played.

**SPECIAL NOTE: Teams receiving a bye in the first round shall automatically be the host team in the next round of the playoffs.**

The designation of "host" does not guarantee the game will be played at the host school's facility. It does designate the responsibility for management of the contest which includes suggesting a site that will handle the anticipated crowd. A host school may use its home site facility if it can safely provide for the anticipated crowd.

**The host school is charged with the responsibility of securing an adequate facility for the holding of a Softball playoff contest.** It is recommended that where available and when approved, playoff games shall be played in rent-free high school facilities, but in cases where it is necessary to pay a rental fee for an outside facility; such an arrangement must be approved by the Commissioner prior to the contest.

Competing schools are reminded that CIF Southern Section playoff softball games, while they may be played at one school, are under the control of the CIF-SS. Both competing schools in any one game are given equal consideration regarding seating. If, in the Commissioner's opinion, the host team field is not large enough to accommodate the anticipated crowd, the host team will be required to reserve one-half of the facility's capacity for the visiting school's rooters.

### PRE-GAME ARRANGEMENTS

A. The host school is responsible for:

- 1) Securing a site which meets the standards as outlined in the National Federation Softball Rule Book. (Rule 1, Section 1 & 2). Fields do **NOT** need to have an outfield fence but the "ground rules" should address balls that are hit through the outfield beyond the field of play.
- 2) **Fields with baseball pitching mounds may not be used for any playoff contest.**
- 3) Schools not playing on their high school campus must inform the CIF-SS Office of the location of their host site. **Do not secure a site which requires a time deadline.**
- 4) Typing the ground rules on a card with copies to both umpires and the opposing coach prior to the game.
- 5) Contacting the visitors prior to game day to establish any necessary ground rules should the field or equipment not meet required National Federation standards. (See Rule 1, Section 1 & 2)
- 6) Providing information to the visitors regarding directions to the school, locker room arrangements, visitor parking, or any other special circumstances relative to the contest.
- 7) To prevent game delays – it is recommended that the home team have available a minimum of ten game balls for each game.
- 8) **Game Ball - The home team provides the game balls per National Federation Rules.** The

Rawlings FPCIF-SS will be the game ball for the Southern Section Championship Finals. The ball must have the NFHS stamp along with the COR and compression mark.

9) **Infield/Outfield Practice.** For the Playoffs, each team is allowed a 10-minute pre-game infield and/or outfield warm-up on the playing field prior to the start of the contest. **For the Championship Final this time will be reduced to 7 minutes.**

B. The CIF-SS office is not presently equipped to survey all sites during the coming post-season competition, and although it is necessary that one team be designated the HOST team, it shall be kept in mind that the game belongs equally to both competing schools. Therefore, it is recommended that a pre-game planning meeting be held to cover all details (field conditions, crowd control, supervision) connected with the staging of every playoff contest.

C. During playoffs, teams competing in the playoffs are not allowed to work-out or practice at the site of Southern Section Softball Championships which will be played at Deanna Manning Stadium at Colonel Bill Barber Marine Corps Memorial Park (1 Civic Center Drive, Irvine).

### **GAME TIMES**

All games are scheduled for **3:15 p.m.** When schools must travel extensive distances for a playoff game, it is recommended that the teams mutually agree to a later start time. A school may play at other times or on other days if it is mutually agreeable to both competing schools. If the date of a scheduled contest is changed it must be played before the next scheduled playoff round.

Any changes must be confirmed between your opponent prior to contacting our office or the game officials/local assignor. **Any game time, location change, or date change must be sent via e-mail to the CIF-SS office. The e-mail must include the following information:**

- **Division**
- **Teams in the Contest**
- **New game time / location / date**
- **The statement "I have confirmed this change with the Athletic Director, (insert name)"**
- **The visiting school's Athletic Director has been included in the e-mail**

**Send the e-mail to all the following individuals:**

Assistant Commissioner: Thom Simmons at [thoms@cifss.org](mailto:thoms@cifss.org)  
Program Coordinator: Alex Lagos at [alexl@cifss.org](mailto:alexl@cifss.org)  
CIF Officials Rep: Vince Rosse at [m1aman308@mac.com](mailto:m1aman308@mac.com)  
Your local Assignor: *for games played in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or Quarter-final round.*

## **PLAYOFF REQUIREMENTS – ALL TEAMS/HOST SITES**

### **REPORTING SCORES**

For all rounds of the playoffs, both teams **must** post the game result into cifsshome.org under teams tab, schedules and scores. All game results should be entered as soon as possible after the completion of the contest so that the next round, in terms of host team assignments and officials, may be finalized

### **SQUAD SIZE**

The squad size of the team should only include the regular season rostered varsity team up to 25 person maximum allowed in the dugout; however, the CIF-SS will only provide **awards for 20 per team**. There is a seat limit at the Championship Finals and all overflow players/coaches/trainer/stats personal will be seated behind the team bench area.

### **GAMES OFFICIALS**

Officials for all playoff matches will be coordinated through the CIF-SS. Schools will be notified well in advance of the names of officials assigned to their games. Out of area Officials will be assigned starting in the Semi-Final round. In all matches leading to the championship finals, the **Plate Umpire shall receive \$96 and Base Umpire \$96**.

When officials travel significant distances to officiate a playoff game, meals and mileage **may** also be authorized.

### **SCORE KEEPER**

A qualified, experienced scorekeeper shall be provided by the host team. It is recommended that scorekeepers from both teams sit together for the duration of the game.

### **AWARDS**

The Southern Section will present awards to the champion and finalist teams in all EIGHT divisions of the playoffs. CIF-SS patches and t-shirts will be awarded to the 20 members of the championship team in all divisions. Individual patches will be provided for 20 members of the finalist team in all nine divisions.

## TOURNAMENT RULES

1. **RULES (MERCY RULE)** (10 run rule - Blue Book Bylaw 2800.1) **Games shall end after five innings of a seven-inning game when a team is behind by 10 runs (applicable to rounds 1 and 2 only).** All playoff games after round 2 will be a minimum of seven (7) innings. All playoff games will be conducted under the 2026 National Federation Softball Rules, except where Blue Book rulings or this bulletin supersede.
2. **PRE-GAME BATTING PRACTICE** - Includes bunting or slap hitting. Teams entered in the softball playoffs **WILL NOT** be permitted to take batting practice on the day of the scheduled contest. (CIF Southern Section Blue Book Bylaw 2813.2)

Batting practice is construed as any type of pitching motion with ANY type of ball from in front of the batter (including pitching machines, underhand tossing, overhand throwing, or pepper).

### **SIDE SOFT TOSS and BATTING TEES WILL BE ACCEPTABLE FOR PRE-GAME BATTING WARMUP.**

The player who tosses the ball must not be standing; they must be sitting or on a knee directly to the side facing the batter. The ball should be lifted, not pitched, to the batter. Coaches are responsible for instructing and alerting all players of this rule. Coaches should also instruct players on the correct allowable position a person tossing ball should be in. At no time should the person tossing the ball be any place other than directly to the side of the “plate” and directly facing the batter.

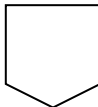
**THE PENALTY FOR BATTING PRACTICE WITH A WIFFLE BALL, SOFTBALL, BASEBALL, FRONT TOSS, ETC. MAY BE FORFEITURE OF THE GAME.**

Tosser



Located directly to the side of the plate not standing

Plate



Batter



Batter is facing the person tossing the ball

A potential batting practice violation is not a violation under NFHS rules that can be protested. If the situation occurs the coach must bring the issue to the attention of the home plate umpire at the pre-game meeting and ask that it be recorded. The umpire will then forward that information in a report to our office after the game is over. The game is not played under protest.

#### **Question:**

***If a coach, during the home plate pre-game meeting, does not announce to the umpire and their opponent that a possible violation of the batting practice rule has occurred could that violation be considered at any time after?***

#### **Answer:**

***No, any perceived batting practice violation must be noted by the plate umpire prior the end of the pregame meeting to be reported to the CIF-SS Office.***



**THE  
BEST  
USE  
THE  
BEST**

**GATORADE**





## 2026 NFHS SOFTBALL RULES CHANGES

**1-9-6:** With the increasing accessibility and use of electronic devices, it is important to establish clear boundaries for their use in competitive softball. Players shall not record audio or video while on the playing surface, as doing so presents significant safety risks and potential distractions that can compromise the integrity of the game. Movement and recording during live play—whether with handheld devices, wearable cameras, or phones—can interfere with a player's ability to perform safely and effectively. Handheld equipment may limit a player's capacity to catch or throw a ball, while wearable devices can become entanglement hazards or create impact risks during high-speed plays or collisions. Additionally, extra foot traffic or positioning for the sake of capturing footage can unintentionally place individuals in the path of play, leading to unnecessary contact or disruption. Beyond safety, the use of recording equipment on the field raises concerns around focus and liability. Players distracted by filming may not respond as quickly to the ball or to their teammates, and their inattention could increase the chance of injury. Moreover, audio recordings introduce privacy and liability considerations, especially when capturing conversations during competition. For these reasons, no player is permitted to record while on the field of play. The emphasis must remain on maintaining a safe, focused, and fair playing environment for all participants.

**Rule 8:** To improve clarity and enhance the overall usability of the rules, the existing content was reorganized into a structured outline format. This new layout allows for easier navigation and better comprehension of key concepts by clearly separating topics and presenting information in a logical, accessible sequence. One significant change involved dividing the original Section 8-4 into two distinct sections. This split more clearly distinguishes between situations in which runners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out and those where they advance with liability. By isolating these scenarios, officials, coaches, and players can more readily understand the conditions under which runners are protected or at risk during play. Additionally, article references were added to corresponding PENALTIES and EFFECTS. This change provides direct links between specific rule violations and their consequences, eliminating ambiguity and helping users quickly identify the appropriate rulings and applications. The result is a cleaner, more intuitive rule structure that supports accurate rule enforcement and improved learning.

**10-4-2:** Effective January 1, 2027, heather gray umpire pants will no longer be permitted for use, as manufacturers have discontinued their production. This update reflects a practical shift to ensure that umpires can purchase and wear uniform pants that are currently being manufactured and readily available through suppliers. Moving forward, umpires will be expected to wear pants in either charcoal gray or navy, both of which are actively produced and supported by major manufacturers. The transition to these colors—particularly charcoal gray—provides consistency in appearance while allowing state associations and officials to align with what is accessible in the current marketplace. This change comes in response to ongoing feedback from state associations, which emphasized the challenges officials face in locating heather gray pants and the need for standardized, available uniform options. By establishing a clear implementation date and aligning with existing production trends, this adjustment supports both uniformity and ease of compliance across all levels of competition. Pants in either heather or charcoal gray will be legal until January 1, 2027, when charcoal pants will be required.



## 2026 NFHS Softball Points of Emphasis

### **Obstruction**

Obstruction is defined as the act of a defensive player who hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitch or interferes with the legal progress of a runner or batter-runner advancing on the bases. This interference may be intentional or unintentional, and it can be either physical or verbal. However, obstruction does not apply if the defensive player is in possession of the ball or is making the initial play on a batted ball.

The central element in identifying obstruction lies in whether the runner's progress is actually impeded. If the runner or batter-runner is not affected—if there is no delay, no forced alteration of their path, or no hesitation—then by rule, obstruction has not occurred. A defensive player's mere presence or positioning, even if questionable, cannot be ruled as obstruction unless it results in an actual impediment to the runner. An exception exists only for a fake tag, which in itself constitutes obstruction, regardless of whether physical impediment occurs.

Impeding a runner means creating a negative effect on their ability to run the bases. This might include a runner slowing down, altering their intended path, stopping altogether, retreating to the previous base, or making contact with a fielder that disrupts their movement. These examples underscore that the umpire must rely on judgment to determine both whether the runner was impeded and to what extent their progress was affected.

Unlike many rule violations in softball that carry standardized penalties—such as awarding two bases for a thrown ball that goes out of play or one base for a pitched ball entering dead ball territory—obstruction rulings are situational and vary based on the specifics of each play. The purpose of the obstruction award is not to penalize the defensive team arbitrarily, but to nullify the negative effect of the obstruction. The runner is not being granted an advantage; rather, they are being restored to the position they would have achieved had the obstruction not occurred. This could mean advancing the runner or, in some cases, returning them to a previous base—whatever is necessary to correct the disruption caused by the obstruction, based on the umpire's judgment.

### **Maintaining an Unobstructed View of the Play**

There are times when an umpire must move from their primary position to maintain an unobstructed view of a play. This is mentioned several times in the NFHS Softball Umpire Manual but, until now, there has not been any guidance for the umpire in the manual. Information has been added to the Umpire Manual to explain aspects of the play that should be considered when moving from the primary position to maintain an unobstructed view of the play.

There are key interactions of the four elements (offense, defense, ball, and base) on each play that need to be viewed clearly in order to make a judgment call. On tag plays:

- Defense contacting the offense with the ball (tagging the runner)
- Defense controlling the ball through the process of applying the tag
- Offense contacting the base.

All three of these key interactions must remain within the umpire's view in order to make an accurate judgment call on the play. Also, when adjusting, an umpire needs to maintain proper distance as to ensure no key interactions of the play are missed.

Details of each play like:

- Defensive positioning
- Direction, height and timing of the throw
- Path of the runner
- Timing of the ball and runner arriving near the base

All these items need to be evaluated in each particular play prior to moving from the primary positioning as each play develops slightly differently. Understanding how these items are going to come together on a particular play allows the umpire to determine where the key interactions will occur, allowing them to adjust, when necessary, to maintain an unobstructed view of the play.

## BLUE BOOK RULES 2025-2026 – GENERAL

Following are key points coaches should review with their assistants and participants about CIF-SS rules and regulations as set down in the Blue Book. This list is NOT all-inclusive and only highlights some of the key areas.

### 201. STANDARDS OF ELIGIBILITY

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=55>

### 210. PHYSICAL ASSAULT OF A GAME OFFICIAL OR EVENT OFFICIAL

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=86>

### 212. AMATEUR STATUS

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=88>

### 220. BASIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=92>

### 500. AUTHORIZED PARTICIPATION

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=98>

### 503.G ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT / PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=103>

### 503.H ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT / CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=103>

### 503.M PLAYER CONDUCT

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=105>

### 503M. COACH EJECTION

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=105>

### 506. PRACTICE ALLOWANCE

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=110>

### 600. COMPETITION ON AN OUTSIDE TEAM

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=120>

### 1227. SUNDAY RESTRICTION

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=148>

### 1228. NOISEMAKERS PROHIBITED

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=148>

## BLUE BOOK RULES 2025-2026 – SOFTBALL

Following are key points coaches should review with their assistants and participants about CIF-SS rules and regulations as set down in the Blue Book. This list is NOT all in-inclusive and only highlights some of the key areas for Softball.

### **2800. LENGTH OF GAMES**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=187>

### **2801. OFFICIAL NATIONAL FEDERATION AUTHENTICATION MARK**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=187>

### **2802. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=187>

### **2803. REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=187>

### **2804. RULES**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=187>

### **2805. SCRIMMAGES**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=187>

### **2806. STARTING DATES FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC CONTESTS**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=187>

### **2807. MAXIMUM TEAM CONTESTS**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=188>

### **2808. END OF COMPETITION**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=188>

### **2809. OUTSIDE COMPETITION BY AN INDIVIDUAL**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=188>

### **2810. SOFTBALL-BASEBALL SLOW-PITCH DISTINCTIONS**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=188>

### **2811. NIGHT SOFTBALL GAME TIME LIMIT**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=188>

### **2812. COUNTING A GAME**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=188>

### **2813. PLAYOFFS**

<https://cifss.org/resources/blue-book/?gotopage=188>



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## **ALL CIF INFORMATION**

The All CIF-SS teams are decided by the coaches' committees for each sport.

To be considered, your coach must submit their nominations to the CIF Southern Section by the given date.

**SOFTBALL NOMINATIONS ARE DUE BY June 1, 2026**

**Please see the Google Form in the Downloads Section of the Softball page.**

**[All CIF SS Softball Nomination Form 2026](#)**

The CIF-SS will receive the first team list from the committee and release those on [www.cifss.org](http://www.cifss.org).

We will also mail the first team certificates to the athlete's school.

The CIF-SS office does not collect 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> team information. If the sport has a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> team, that information will be available through the coaches committee.

**ALL CIF SOUTHERN SECTION  
SOFTBALL 2025-2026 SEASON – NOMINATION FORM**

HIGH SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_ LEAGUE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 OVERALL RECORD: W \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ LEAGUE RECORD: W \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ DIVISION: \_\_\_\_\_  
 COACH'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ COACH'S CELL: \_\_\_\_\_

**HOW TO NOMINATE YOUR ATHLETES:**

- ONLY PLAYERS SELECTED LEAGUE MVP OR 1<sup>ST</sup> TEAM ALL LEAGUE ARE ELIGIBLE
- ONLY TWO PLAYERS CAN BE NOMINATED. ADDITIONAL NOMINATIONS WILL NULIFY THE ENTRY
- IF YOU NOMINATE A PITCHER, ENTER BOTH HITTING AND PITCHING STATS
- INCLUDE ALL REGULAR SEASON STATISTICS, NO PLAYOFF STATISTICS
- THE LEAGUE MVP MUST BE LISTED AS YOUR NUMBER 1 RANKED PLAYER
- UTILITY PLAYER IS DEFINED AS A PLAYER WITH A MINIMUM OF 6 GAMES AT 2 OR MORE POSITIONS
- NOMINATION DOES NOT GUARANTEE SELECTION

RANK	LEAGUE HONORS	NAME	YEAR	POSITION	GAMES PLAYED	FIELDING AVG	CHANCES	STOLEN BASES	BATTING AVG	ON BASE AVG	AT BATS	HITS	RBI	RUNS SCORED
1														
2														

PITCHER, ONLY IF LISTED ABOVE	WON	LOST	INNINGS PITCHED	BATTERS FACED	HITS ALLOWED	TOTAL RUNS	EARNED RUNS	ERA	K' S	BB

UTILITY POSITIONS, ONLY IF LISTED ABOVE	POSITION	GAMES PLAYED	POSITION	GAMES PLAYED	POSITION	GAMES PLAYED	POSITION	GAMES PLAYED	POSITION	GAMES PLAYED

**BATTING AVG** = HITS/OFFICIAL TIMES AT BAT (OTAB)  
**OTAB** = TOTAL TIMES AT BAT MINUS (WALK+SAC+HIT BY PITCH)  
**OBA** = HITS+WALKS+HIT BY PITCH/OTAB+WALKS+HIT BY PITCH  
**ERA** = EARNED RUNS X 7/INNINGS PITCHED  
**CHANCES** = PUT OUTS+ASSISTS+ERRORS  
**FIELDING AVERAGE** = PUT OUTS+ASSISTS/CHANCES



# MEMO

**To:** CIF STATE REGIONAL QUALIFIERS

**From:** Thom Simmons, CIF-SS Assistant Commissioner, Softball Administrator

**Date:** April 2026

**Subject:** CIF STATE SOFTBALL REGIONAL CRITERIA

The CIF Southern Section will be granted 20 entries into the CIF State Regional Championships. Teams may be moved to a different State Regional Division than the one in which they competed in during the Southern Section playoffs. There are no enrollment parameters in any division. The CIF State Seeding Committee has the authority to adjust when necessary due to travel considerations or when a repeat match-up of a final or semi-final occurs, but every effort is made to keep the schools in the order they are submitted by the Section. If a team(s) elects not to compete in the Regional event a school will be selected from the previous rounds. The highest seeded team that did not advance to the semi-final, or the final, will be invited followed by the next highest seeded team followed by the next, etc. until the entries are filled. The entrants will be as follows:

4 Semifinalists from Southern Section Division 1

4 Semifinalists from Southern Section Division 2

2 Semifinalists from Southern Section Division 3

2 Finalists from Southern Section Division 4

2 Finalists from Southern Section Division 5

2 Finalists from Southern Section Division 6

2 Finalists from Southern Section Division 7

2 Finalists from Southern Section Division 8

For additional information visit the CIF State website [www.cifstate.org](http://www.cifstate.org)

or

<https://www.cifstate.org/sports/softball/index>

# INTENT TO OPT OUT DECLARATION

## **MANDATORY NOTICE REQUIREMENT**

If a school elects to opt out of participation in the Regional Playoffs, the **Principal is REQUIRED to provide written notification to the Section Commissioner prior to the school's Section Semi-Final contest.**

**Failure to comply will result in an automatic \$1,000 fine and may trigger additional sanctions as determined by CIF.**

THIS INFORMATION MUST BE RETURNED TO YOUR SECTION OFFICE BY THE FRIDAY (5 PM) OF YOUR WEEK OF SECTION PLAYOFFS. IF YOUR SCHOOL CHOOSES TO OPT OUT OF THE REGIONAL/STATE PLAYOFFS

<hr/>	
School Year	
<hr/>	
Sport	
<hr/>	
Gender	
<hr/>	
School	
BY SIGNING BELOW, WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT OUR SCHOOL WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE MENTIONED REGIONAL/STATE CHAMPIONSHIP.	
<hr/>	<hr/>
School Principal (Signature)	Date
<hr/>	<hr/>
Coach (Signature)	Date

**COMPLETE THIS FORM, THEN EMAIL IT TO YOUR RESPECTIVE SECTION (SPORT REPRESENTATIVE).**

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