

Article VIII – Softball

1. PRACTICE
 - A. “Organized Practice” is defined as a practice which is attended by the players and a coach, and at which the coach directs, instructs and drills the player, players and/or the whole team. B. Practice shall not be held on Sundays or Christmas.
2. STARTING DATES – No organized practice for all levels may begin prior to a date established by the CCS — See page 11.
3. COACHING STAFF LIMIT – The maximum number of coaches, paid or volunteer, for softball is 6 coaches for three levels; 5 coaches for two levels.
4. GAMES AND GAME LIMITS
 - A. It is considered to be a “game” whenever two schools meet in any competition in any CIF approved sport. The game limit for softball is:
 - Varsity: 27 + 2 Scrimmages
 - Junior Varsity: 23 + 2 Scrimmages
 - B. A tournament counts as the number of games played.
 - C. An alumni contest shall not be included in the game limit of any sport.
 - D. Games shall not be played on Sundays.
 - E. All games shall be played according to the National Federation Rules.
 - F. Mercy Rule: A 10-run rule shall be used for all League games when one team is at least 10 runs ahead of another team after five innings for varsity and JV games. Further, for the JV level only, if one team is ahead 15 runs or more after 3 innings the game shall end.
 - G. There shall be no time limit on Varsity or JV games.
5. STARTING TIMES

All League games shall begin at 4:00 PM except where facilities are impacted. Starting times for all games shall be designated on all schedules and must be observed under the penalty of forfeiture. Game times and/or locations can be changed by mutual agreement from each school’s Athletic Director and WCAL Commissioner approval.
6. SCRIMMAGES
 - A. A scrimmage is defined as a practice or athletic exhibition wherein teams from different schools participate and compete, without the benefit of paid officials, timers, or scorers, and no admission is charged.
 - B. A scrimmage shall not involve any costs whatsoever.
 - C. All scrimmages must be listed on a school’s official sports schedule if they are scheduled before the season begins. If a scrimmage is scheduled after the official schedule is printed and distributed, all member schools and the League Office shall be notified within 24 hours.
 - D. All scrimmages shall be included in the official game limit set for each team in each sport.
 - E. Scrimmages may be scouted.
7. SCHEDULE
 - A. A double round robin League schedule shall be played each year by the varsity and JV teams.
 - B. The varsity League schedule shall end in time to allow for the League playoffs before the CCS playoffs.
 - C. Easter Tournaments: Both the week before and after Easter have been reserved for Easter Tournaments, and both weeks shall be considered a “dead period” for League games and League makeup games. However, makeup games may be played if both schools agree, but no school is obligated to make up a postponed League game during this two-week period.

8. ELIGIBILITY

- A. Moving Up OK, But No Downward Movement After League Begins: No player of a team whose name appears on an eligibility list may be moved to a team of a lower classification once the League starts, even though he/she may not have played in nor suited up for a League game. A player may be moved up to a team of a higher classification at any time during the season and his/her name shall be added to the official eligibility list as soon as possible, with proper and prompt notice to the other schools.
- B. Once the league begins, players may be moved up to the Varsity for non-league contests. However, the maximum number of contests for that player in a season may not be exceeded.
- C. Seniors: Senior athletes are not eligible for junior varsity competition.

9. SPORT-SPECIFIC RULES

- A. Levels of Competition
There shall be varsity and junior varsity competition.
- B. Adult Coaches for Varsity and Junior Varsity Games
 - 1. An adult coach may occupy either of the coaching boxes providing that a second designated adult coach in uniform is in the dugout.
 - 2. If one team does not have two designated adult coaches, then both teams must abide by the rule limiting the adult coach to the coaching box directly in front of his/her dugout.
 - 3. On-field base coaches must be in uniform and a uniform is defined as softball or coaching shoes, softball uniform pants, softball uniform shirt or windbreaker and coaches helmet.
- C. Equipment
 - 1. Varsity and JV: must use NFHS approved bats for practice and games.
- D. Batting Practice
There shall be no batting practice prior to a League game.
- E. Facilities
 - 1. The host school shall provide proper field conditions such as cut grass, chalk lines, home plate, a batter's box, and the pitcher's circle.
 - 2. Restraining lines near the players' bench shall be used if there are no dugouts.

10. POSTPONEMENTS, TIES, AND PROTESTS

- A. Postponements
 - 1. Games postponed because of rain shall be rescheduled for the next available day. The home team school shall set the date upon consultation with the visiting school. Any conflicts shall be resolved by the Commissioner. The sequence of make-up games shall follow the sequence of the regular schedule whenever and wherever possible. The only exception to make-up games are both the week before and after Easter. (See "Schedule/Easter Tournaments" above.)
 - 2. For further details, see "General By-Laws/Article IV/Postponements."

B. Ties

1. A tied game shall be considered a completed game if at least five innings have been completed. Individual records of a tied game shall stand and be official.
2. If, at the completion of a regulation game (seven innings), the eighth and ninth innings shall be played the same as all previous innings. If the game remains tied after nine innings, then beginning in the 10th inning a runner shall be placed on second base at the start of each inning. That runner shall be the player in the batting order who precedes the leadoff batter in each inning starting with the 10th inning. The game will proceed each inning using this adjustment until one team has won or the game has to be called due to darkness or weather problems. In the event that a game is tied after the fifth inning, including games that go extra innings as described here, such games will be considered a completed game and will not be replayed.
3. Tied games which are called because of rain, darkness, curfew, etc., shall not be replayed at a later date if five innings have been completed. In this case, the game will be considered a tied game, and each team shall receive one point in accordance with the point system used to determine round robin championships.
4. Suspended Games—A softball game that is suspended by weather, darkness, etc. shall be considered a completed game if at least five innings have been played, or 4½ innings have been played with the home team ahead in the score when the game was postponed. If any game is called by the umpires due to rain, darkness, curfew, etc prior to either 5 full innings or 4½ innings as described above, regardless of the score of the game when it is called, that game shall be classified as a suspended game and shall be rescheduled at the next available future date. That game shall be resumed at the point when the umpires called the game.
5. If a lower level team is involved in a tied game under the circumstances of #3 above, and each school's Athletic Directors are in unanimous agreement that it is not in the best interest to complete the tied game due to travel restrictions, then the game does not have to be completed.

C. Protests

All valid protested games, both varsity and JV, shall be played from the point of protest to completion.

1. If the protest occurs after the fifth inning, and the protested game is in the first round, the game shall be completed prior to the beginning of the next regularly scheduled game between the two schools or by mutual contest of the Athletic Directors.
2. If the protest occurs before completion of the fifth inning, or if the protested game is in the second round, then the postponement rule applies. (See "A" above.)

11. ROUND ROBIN COMPETITION WINNERS

- A. The winner of the round robin competition shall be determined by a point system as follows:
1. Two (2) points for a game won.
 2. One (1) point for a game tied.
 3. Zero (0) points for a game lost.

12. VARSITY PLAYOFFS AND LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS

- A. There shall be a playoff for the varsity only. The winner of the playoff and the winner of the round robin shall be declared co-champions of the league. The winner of the round robin shall receive no less than the #1 seed to the CCS playoffs regardless of how they finish in the WCAL playoffs. The winner of the WCAL playoffs shall be the #2 seed to CCS.
- B. There shall be no playoff to determine the JV championship. The winner of the round robin in the JV league shall be declared champion. In the case of ties for first place in league, regardless of the number of teams involved in the tie, all teams shall be declared co-champions.

- C. For varsity only, in the event that two teams tie for the round robin championship and each team has defeated the other, both teams shall be declared co-champions. If one team has defeated the other team twice in round robin play, that team shall be designated the round robin champion, and shall receive all the benefits associated with being the round robin champion. In the event that a third team wins the playoffs, then all three teams shall be declared tri-champions.
 - D. For varsity only, if three or more teams are tied for the round robin championship, the team with the greatest number of wins within the tie shall be designated the first place team and declared the round robin champion. This team shall receive all the benefits associated with winning the round robin championship.
 - E. For varsity only, if a tie still exists after tiebreaker “D” above, the overall champion shall be determined by the team that wins the playoffs. Seedings for the playoff shall be determined by Section 13, “Method for Breaking Ties in League Standings and Entries into the CCS.”
13. METHOD FOR BREAKING TIES IN LEAGUE STANDINGS AND ENTRIES INTO THE CCS
- A. Multiple ties in the double round standing shall be broken starting with the lowest teams tied, i.e., a tie for fifth place shall be broken before a tie for second place is broken.
 - B. The following procedure shall be used to break ties in the order as listed:
 - 1. Head to head competition involves only contests played within league schedule.
 - 2. Greatest number of wins within the tie.
 - 3. Greatest number of wins above the tie.
 - 4. Greatest number of wins versus the highest-ranked team above the tie.
 - 5. Greatest number of wins below the tie starting with the next-placed team below the tie and moving downward.
 - 6. If a tie still exists, then the Commissioner shall determine the tiebreaker by chance (coin flip or drawing).
 - C. Coin Flips or Drawings
 - 1. When a coin flip or drawing becomes the last option to break ties in team standings, whether for final round robin standings or representation to CCS playoffs, the Commissioner shall determine the time and place for such a drawing. The drawing shall be held regardless of whether the involved schools are present. If a school does not desire to participate in the drawing, the Commissioner shall be notified in writing 24 hours prior to the drawing.
 - 2. The winner of the coin flip or drawing shall be given the higher seed(s), but the seed(s) shall only apply to the League playoffs.
 - 3. In determining the rank of at-large entries into the CCS playoffs, the team(s) with the highest total CCS points, when applicable, shall receive entry into the CCS playoffs before the other teams involved in the tie, regardless of which team(s) won the coin flip or drawing. If two or more teams involved in the tie have the same number of CCS points, then the results of the coin flip or drawing shall determine the rank of at-large entry into CCS.
14. VARSITY PLAYOFF FORMAT – All games are played at the site of the high seed.
- A. The playoffs shall be organized and supervised by the Commissioner.
 - B. The playoffs shall normally begin on the Tuesday after the end of the regular League schedule, weather permitting.
 - C. Two officials shall be assigned by the Commissioner for all playoff games. Home team officials shall be assigned to all games.

- D. The playoffs shall operate in the following manner for a six-team playoff:
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| First Round | 1st place and 2 nd place teams receives a bye.
3rd place team vs 6th place team.
4th place team vs 5th place team. |
| Semifinals | The lowest-seed winner of the first round shall play the first place team.
The other winner of the first round shall play the second place team. |
| Finals | The finals will be played between the two teams that have won the semi-finals. |
1. If two teams tied for first place and are co-champions, and the tie must be broken by a coin flip as described in Section 14, the loser of the coin flip is the #2 seed in the playoffs and will play the #7 seed in the first round. If the #2 seed wins this first-round game, they shall play the lowest seed remaining in the second round.
 2. If three or more teams are tied for first place and the tie must be broken by a coin flip as described in Section 14, the winner of the tie shall be the #1 seed in the playoffs. Additional coin flips will be done to determine the remaining seeds. If the #2 seed wins in the first round, they shall play the lowest seed remaining in the semifinals. The #1 seed will play the other winner. If the #2 seed loses in the first round, then the #3 seed, if they win, shall play the lowest seed remaining in the semifinals. If the #3 seed defeats the #1 seed in the semifinals, they will be the home team in the championship game. If four teams tied for the round robin championship, then the coin flips would determine the seeds and the #4 seed would receive none of the above benefits. In this case, the winner of the playoffs would be designated the sole league champion.
- E. Playoff Games Sites: All games shall be played at the site of the higher seed.
- F. Mercy Rule for playoffs: If a team is losing by 10 runs after 5 innings the game shall be called with the team ahead winning the game.
- G. Tied Playoff Games: In the case of a tied game called because of darkness or weather, the game shall be replayed the next day starting from the spot the game was called.
- H. Uncompleted Playoffs: If the League playoffs cannot be played at all or cannot be completed in their entirety, then the final standings shall be determined by the results of the double round robin schedule. The first-place team shall be the League champion and the #1 seed to the CCS playoffs and the second-place team shall be the #2 seed to the CCS playoffs.

15. CENTRAL COAST SECTION PLAYOFFS

- A. The winner of the round robin shall be designated the #1 seed to CCS.
- B. The winner of the league tournament shall be designated the #2 seed to CCS.
- C. If a tie exists for the round robin championship the seeding to CCS shall be determined by the rules stated in Section 19. E. on page 16 of this Handbook.
- D. Opting Out of the CCS Playoffs: A school shall not withdraw its team from such competition without prior notice to the Commissioner. In the event a team chooses not to participate in the CCS Playoffs or does not have enough CCS entry points to qualify for the CCS playoffs, each team below that team in the round robin standings moves up one place.
- E. Order of Entry for At-Large Entries: Teams shall enter the CCS playoffs as at-large entries based upon how the teams finished in the League round robin. This includes the use of tiebreakers to break a tie in the League standings. (See “Method for Breaking Ties in League Standings and Entries into the CCS” for the tiebreaker procedure.)

16. OFFICIALS

- A. Officials for all varsity and junior varsity League games shall be obtained by the host school.
- B. There shall be two officials assigned for each League game.
- C. The officials must be members of an association approved by the Central Coast Section.
- D. Coaches shall be permitted to reject an official and shall notify the host school at least one week prior to the game involved.

- E. Officials for the varsity playoff games shall be obtained by the Commissioner.
- F. If the Required Number of Officials Are Not Present
 - 1. Varsity – A varsity team may refuse to play any game when less than the number of required officials are on hand.
 - 2. Lower Levels – Every effort shall be made to play any game below the varsity level when the required number of officials are not on hand. A person or persons, mutually agreed upon by both coaches, may officiate the game.
- G. For further details, refer to General By-Laws Article IV – Special Rulings “Forfeitures” and “Postponements.”

17. GAME CONDUCT

- A. If a player or coach is ejected from a contest during the season, that player or coach must sit out the next contest following their ejection. If a player participates in the next contest following his/her ejection, that player will be treated as an ineligible player for that contest and his team shall forfeit the contest.
 - 1. While sitting out, the coach may not communicate during a game in any way, including all digital formats, with his/her coaching staff or players
- B. If the contest from which a player or coach was ejected is the last contest of the year for that team, the above stated disqualification would carry over to that team’s first regularly scheduled league contest the next year.
- C. Any player or coach ejected from any CCS playoff contest because of flagrant misconduct or unsportsmanlike behavior shall be excluded from participating in the remainder of the CCS playoff contests in the sport for that year, including any CIF contests. If the ejection occurs in the final CCS-CIF contest for that team, then the player or coach would have to sit out the first league contest the next season.
- D. Individuals involved in a team brawl may be subject to disciplinary action by the League.
- E. Repeat offenders shall be subject to longer suspensions.
- F. A report of a player ejection, coach ejection, or team brawl must be made to the League Commissioner. Failure to file a report shall result in League censure.

18. ALL-LEAGUE TEAM

The coaches shall meet during the week after the end of the regular season to select the All-League team. Coaches shall nominate and elect the Most Valuable Player and the Most Valuable Pitcher. In addition, the All-League team shall be comprised of players selected from each team in the League by that team’s coach based upon how each team finished in the round robin as follows:

Finish	First Team	Second Team
First Place	4	2
Second Place	3	2
Third Place	2	2
Fourth Place	2	2
Fifth Place	1	2
Sixth Place	1	2

If any teams are tied in the League standings, all teams within the tie shall be entitled to the number of All-League players from the highest place in the tie. In addition, teams may each select one additional player to be designated as Honorable Mention All-League. Finally, coaches may select a Player of the Year..