GHSA Points of Emphasis

- **COACHING** – A “Community Coach” may not function as a Head Coach, or be named by the school as the Head Coach on publications and in the media.

- **UNSPORTING ACTS** – Such acts committed after the completion of the contest shall be the responsibility of the host school Game Administration. If witnessed by a game official, a Game Report shall be submitted to the GHSA Office.

- **GHSA Concussion Policy** – Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behavior consistent with a concussion shall not return to a practice or game until cleared to participate by an “Appropriate Health Care Professional”

- **Appropriate Health Care Professional** – May include; license physician (MD/DO), nurse practitioner, physicians assistant, or certified athletic trainer with concussion evaluation and management training.
• EYE BLACK – Players shall not be allowed to use “eye black” in excess as an adornment or for personal expression. “Eye Black” shall only be used for the purpose of eliminating the glare of the sun.
• RATIONALE: The excessive use of “eye black” can cause it to be transferred to another player or onto the ball. When observed, the umpire shall direct the head coach to correct the issue.

General Information (C)
• The number of games allowed (not including region or state tournament) shall not exceed a total of (28) games, in any combination of single games and invitational tournament games.
• Teams may not play more than (7) games, in any format, during invitational tournaments. It is recommended that invitational tournament games be only scheduled to play on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and must be sanctioned through the GHSA Office.
• Teams may not play more than (8) games, in any format, during region tournaments with a minimum of (2) games per day, per field. (Exception: Championship Game). NOTE: “Play-in” games are considered part of the regular season, and shall be officiated by the host school association.

OFFICIAL STARTING DATES
• Date for 1st official practice is August 1, 2013
• Date for 1st official game is August 9, 2013
• (1) official scrimmage at any time after August 1 and prior to the 1st official game of the competing schools.
• Cancer Awareness Week – September 9 - 14

General Information-Con’t.
• Sub-varsity teams are allowed to play 70% of the varsity schedule of their respective school, but no more than (19) games.
• Players who participate at both the varsity and sub-varsity levels shall not exceed a combination of the number of games scheduled by their respective varsity team.
• Per NFHS Rule 2.26.3 – (Varsity Level) A regulation game is a game that is (7) innings. Exceptions: Extra innings, weather, darkness, mercy rule. This includes “invitational” tournament games.
• Sub-Varsity games may have time-limits imposed on them.
By-Law 2.67 DEFINITIONS
• "Practice" – The period of time that a participant engages in coach-supervised sport practice sessions or conditioning related activity.
• "Time Frame" – From the time the player(s) report to the practice area until they leave the area.
• "Conditioning" – Any activity/period of time that requires running, sprinting, weight training, etc.
• "Walk-Through" – A one-hour period of time that is not considered "practice" and does not have any element of conditioning related to it.
• "Hydration" – The consumption of approved liquids (should be unlimited).
• "Rest Time" – The time required for players to re-hydrate and cool down (should be in a shaded or "Cool zone").

Class A Power Rankings
• Each Class A school, and ALL schools competing against Class A schools, are responsible to submit the results of EACH game within (48) hours of the completion of EVERY game to MaxPreps.
  (kmclarfy@maxpreps.com)
• Failure to provide the required information within the allowed time will result in a $100.00 fine.
  NOTE: The Power Rankings for Class A schools are affected by the win-loss record of every school they compete against, regardless of the classification.

DUGOUT DECOREM
• Defensive coaches are not allowed outside the physical confines of the dugout, regardless of the location of the dugout.
• Media individuals are NOT allowed in live ball territory (inside the fences) and temporary lines to extend the dugout are NOT permitted.
• Only certified school personnel are allowed in the confines of the dugout i.e. players, coaches, trainers, doctors, etc. Scorekeepers, photographers, and statisticians who are not school certified employees are not allowed in the dugout.
• In the event of inclement weather umpires should allow more flexibility in the "Coaches' Apparel" rule.

STATE TOURNAMENT
End of Regular Season/Region Tournament – Completed no later than October 12 (Classes AA-AAAAA) – October 18 (Class A)
Results to GHSA Office immediately at the conclusion of the regular season.
Round 1 (AA – AAAAA) – October 16 & 17 @ Higher Seed Hosts
Round 1 (A Private & A Public) – October 23 & 24 @ Higher Seeds
Round 2 – (AA – AAAAA) - October 23 & 24 – Higher Seed Hosts
Elite Eight – All Classifications – October 31 – November 2
NFHS Softball
2013
Rules Changes
Major Editorial Changes
Points of Emphasis

Softball Glove
(1-4-1b,c)

- Added that the color of the softball glove/mitt not be entirely optic yellow and that they do not have optic yellow markings on the outside or inside of the glove/mitt resembling the appearance of a softball.

Electronic Devices
(3-6-10)

- Objects, other than scorekeeping materials or devices, in the coach's box are prohibited.
**Stop Watch/Scorekeeping Device**

3-6-10

**Batter Awarded First Base**

(6-1-1 Exception )
(8-1-2 Penalty 1)

- Clarifies when a batter is awarded first base from an illegal pitch.
- Identifies when a hit batter is awarded first base, and that she may not deliberately move to allow the ball to touch her in the batter's box.
- If the pitch is within the batter's box, the batter does not have to make an attempt to avoid getting hit.
- The “Hands” are not part of the bat unless hit, during a swing or by a pitch that is in the strike zone.

**Batter Hit By Pitch**

8-1-2 Penalty 1

If pitch is within the batter’s box, batter does not have to make an attempt to avoid getting hit.

**Headwear Requirements**

(3-2-5)

- Headwear (caps, visors, headbands, ribbons, etc.) may be mixed, but if worn, they must be white, black, beige or school colors (the colors are not required to be the same among team members). The logo may be any color.
- Flat items, no longer than 2 inches, used to control the hair, such as bobby pins, barrettes and hair clips are permitted.
- Plastic visors, bandannas and hair-beads are prohibited.
Penalty Increased For Altered or Non-Approved Bat (7-4-2 Penalty)

- Coaches must be responsible for the equipment being used in each game, even when it is not issued by the school, but a player's personal equipment.
- In addition to an out being called on the batter, the batter and head coach shall be ejected from the contest.
- Player safety and the integrity of the game must be maintained. This type of illegal equipment has no place in the game.

Legal Apparel and Equipment Check

- The Softball Rules Committee and softball administrators continue to be concerned about the use of illegal and/or non-approved equipment. Thus, a rules change was approved this year to strengthen the penalty for use of altered or non-approved bats.
- Umpires are required to check bats and helmets no less than 15-minutres prior to each contest.
- Teams must make all bats and helmets available for the pregame equipment check prior to the umpires arrival at the field.
Defines the Knob (1-5-2a)

- Defines the knob component of the bat and clarifies that it may be molded, lathed, welded or permanently fastened.
- Devices, attachments or wrappings that cause the knob to become flush with the handle are permitted.
- The knob may be covered with grip tape.

Head Coach (3-3-3)

- Identifies that the Plate Umpire should announce any changes and substitutions on the lineup card shall be to the opposing Head Coach.

DP/FLEX Option (3-3-6)

- A team that intends to utilize the DP/FLEX option shall advise the Plate Umpire, and their opponent, during the exchange of line-up cards at the pregame conference.

Interference (3-5-6 Penalty)

- Clarifies that if in the judgment of the umpire, interference prevented a possible double play, the batter and runner committing the interference shall be declared out. Other runners shall be returned to the last base at the time of interference.
- Coaches must make an attempt to avoid interfering with a defensive player attempting to make a play on the ball.
**Interference 3-5-6 Penalty**

If, in the judgment of the umpire, the interference is intentional, base runners shall be returned to the last base touched at the time of interference.

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**Clarification of Legality (6-1-2c)**

- Clarifies the legality of a hole created in front of the pitcher's plate.
- If a hole has been created in front of the pitcher’s plate, the pivot foot may be no higher than the level plane of the ground.

**Defacing The Ball (6-2-2)**

Dirt is NOT a foreign substance. As such, the pitcher does NOT have to wipe the dirt from her hand prior to going to the ball.

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**This is an “Illegal Pitch” – Call it!**
Batter’s Feet Position
(7-3-1)

- Clarifies the batter’s feet position within the batter’s box.
- The batter’s feet must be completely within the batter’s box when the pitcher is ready to pitch.

NOTE: When the pitcher has brought her hands together to start delivery motion of the pitch, the batter cannot be granted timeout.

Flex/Designated Player Education

- The DP/Flex Rule was instituted to encourage further participation and flexibility of the game. The overall impact of this rule has been positive, however there still remains some confusion/challenges with the understanding of the rule.
- Support Information can be found at
  - Officials – NFHS Central Hub
  - www.arbitersports.com
  - under Softball Resources and Video tab
  - Coaches – www.nfhs.org

Batting 7-3-1

Batter risks having a strike called while being out of position.

Both feet of the batter must be completely within the lines when the pitcher is on the pitching plate.
Bench Personnel Conduct (Homerun Celebrations)

- When a batter hits an over the fence or out of the park home run it is an exciting event which many times results in a celebration by all team members coming onto the field.
- This celebration is allowed, however, the following precautions need to be taken:
  - All team members must remain behind the home plate umpire;
  - Allow all runners to contact home plate before engaging in the celebration.
  - The batter MUST keep her helmet on at all times until entering the dugout.

Risk Minimization (Sliding Injuries)

- The NFHS has always been committed to risk minimization. Citing an increase in injuries associated with sliding during competition, the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee has suggested an emphasis on teaching proper sliding techniques during practice.

Concussion Procedure Reminder (3-3-9; 10-2-3k)

- Procedure requires an athlete exhibiting signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion to be removed from the contest.
- GHSA – Player MUST be removed from the game and not returned until an Appropriate Health Care Professional clears her to participate. Failure to have a designated AHCP on site prohibits the player from returning to the game.

Umpires: Administrative Duties (10-1-2 New Note)

- A note was added clarifying the administrative responsibilities of umpires through the completion of required reports.
- State Associations may continue to develop and implement policies that allow for review of unusual incidents that occur while the game officials have jurisdiction, or after the completion of the game. NOTE: GHSA Policy
Pitching NFHS Rules

- NFHS pitching regulations were created and are maintained for high-school-age pitchers of all skill levels, not just those seeking participation opportunities at other levels, i.e. travel or college ball.
- A high school pitcher may begin with one or two feet on the pitching plate, and the ball may be in either the glove hand or bare hand. The pitcher may also step back (before the hands come together) and then forward to gain momentum in her pitching motion.

Pitching 24-Inch Width Infractions

- The NFHS Softball Rules Committee is still concerned over the enforcement of the 24-inch width pitching requirement, when the landing foot is "clearly outside" the 24-inch boundaries.
- In addition, research indicates that pitchers are more susceptible to arm injuries when they attempt to throw a "screwball."
- It is the primary responsibility of the home-plate umpire to make the illegal pitch call in this infraction, but the base umpire(s) may also make this call based on where the landing foot comes to the ground.

Legal Apparel and Equipment

Pitcher’s Uniform

- A pitcher is prohibited from wearing or using any item that, in the umpire’s judgment, distracts the batter.
- Any use of equipment or part of the uniform that, in the umpire’s view, would distract the batter, shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis and could require the removal of such equipment.
- Like all teammates, the pitcher’s jersey MUST be completely tucked in to the game pants/shorts.
Unit Titles
1. Basic Skills
2. Offensive Skills
3. Position Play
4. Team Defense
5. Developing a Practice Plan
6. Coaching Tips