

ARTICLE 26

SOFTBALL

26.1 RULES

- 26.1.1 Official rules for girls softball shall be those published in the current edition of the National Federation Softball Rules Book.
- 26.1.2 School athletic programs at all levels are subject to disciplinary action when a school team is removed from the floor or field prior to completion of the contest.
- 26.1.3 Suspended Game - A suspended game shall be continued from the point of suspension providing the game has a direct bearing in qualifying for regional or state tournaments.
- 26.1.3.1 A game ending with the score tied will be treated as a suspended game providing it is a legal game (four and one-half or five innings).
- 26.1.3.2 The host school is responsible for reporting suspended games to the Region Secretary within three days after the game.
- 26.1.3.3 Suspended games shall be replayed at least three weeks before the State Softball Tournament, if possible.
- DETERMINATION: The AIA Executive Board determined that any suspended or postponed games in the State Softball Tournament will be played from the point of suspension. (Ex. Bd. 3/78)*
- 26.1.4 10-Run Rule - A softball game shall end any time after five innings, or after four and one-half (4-1/2) innings when a team is ten or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat.
- 26.1.5 Invitational softball tournaments may impose a time limit and/or the tie-breaker procedure described in Article 26.1.5 as procedures for ending games.
- 26.1.6 Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective inning being placed on second base (e.g. if the number four batter is the lead off batter, the number three batter in the batting order will be placed on second base.) This procedure will be followed until a winner is determined in a complete inning. Should the player scheduled to be put on second base be a player who has left the game and an out is being called for her time at bat, no out shall be called and the player put on second shall be the player who precedes the one being called out in the batting order.

26.2 SEASON OF SPORT

- 26.2.1 The AIA Standardized Calendar shall be used to identify the starting week for practice, competition and the conclusion of post-season competition.
- 26.2.2 The season of competition for a school shall conclude with that school's last AIA sanctioned competition.

(Section 26.2 cont'd. on next page.)

26.2.3 Spring Season

<u>1A/2A/3A</u>	Practice	no sooner than the	32nd week
	Competition	no sooner than the	35th week
	Championship	to be concluded by the	45th week
<u>4A/5A</u>	Practice	no sooner than the	32nd week
	Competition	no sooner than Wednesday of the	34th week
	Championship	to be concluded by the	45th week

26.2.3.1 Check Conference Handbook for specific dates.

Q: May a student on the high school softball team practice with another softball team before her high school season of competition is completed?

A: No. (See Article 14, Section 14.4) (Ex. Bd. 2/76)

DETERMINATION: Slow pitch and fast pitch softball are different sports but, because of similarities in slow pitch and fast pitch softball, AIA interpretation is they are considered the same sport and no competitor may compete in slow pitch and fast pitch softball at the same time during the season of competition. (Ex. Bd. 11/79)

26.3 PRESEASON INTERSCHOOL VARSITY SCRIMMAGE

26.3.1 A member school shall be permitted to schedule one interschool varsity scrimmage which shall be played in accordance with the following criteria:

- 26.3.1.1 Game uniforms shall not be worn.
- 26.3.1.2 Scrimmage shall consist of seven innings.
- 26.3.1.3 There shall be one or two AIA officials on the field.
- 26.3.1.4 Offense and defense may switch when five runs are scored in one inning.
- 26.3.1.5 Scoreboards shall not be used.
- 26.3.1.6 Scorebooks may be used for purposes of evaluation only.
- 26.3.1.7 Scrimmage is open to the public but there is no charge for admission.
- 26.3.1.8 No scores called into the newspapers.
- 26.3.1.9 Unlimited amount of substitutions and reentry on players.

26.4 SCHEDULES

- 26.4.1 Each Region will develop its own schedule as provided for in the AIA Bylaws.
- 26.4.2 In the absence of a master schedule, a school must have a regularly organized program to qualify for the state tournament. *(See Article 12)*
- 26.4.3 If scheduling difficulties occur, schedules may be increased by one game. The additional game shall be approved by the Conference Executive Committee.

26.5 NUMBER OF GAMES IN SEASON

- 26.5.1 No school shall schedule more than 20 varsity games, including two invitationals, which shall count as one game each.
- 26.5.2 No school shall schedule more than 19 junior varsity or freshman games per team.
- 26.5.3 No player shall participate in more than 20 softball games per season, excluding qualifying and state tournaments.
- 26.5.3.1 EXCEPTION: 1A Conference players may participate in an unlimited number of softball games per season, excluding qualifying and state tournaments.
- 26.5.3.2 EXCEPTION: 2A Conference schools, because of their limited enrollment, may permit a player to participate in an unlimited number of games per season, excluding qualifying and state tournaments.
- 26.5.3.3 EXCEPTION: 3A Conference schools, because of their limited enrollment, may permit a player to participate in 50% more matches or games than the regularly scheduled matches or games per season, excluding qualifying and state tournaments.**
Example: If a school scheduled 20 games or matches, each player could participate in 50% more games or matches for a total of 30.

26.6 CONTEST PARTICIPATION

- 26.6.1 When a student enters an interscholastic contest, regardless of the length of time, it shall be considered participation in the interscholastic contest.

26.7 INTERSCHOOL COMPETITION

- 26.7.1 Only tennis shoes or softball shoes with rubber cleats are permissible.
- 26.7.2 Each team will be limited to a ten-minute warm up on the field.

26.8 COACHES / COACHING

- 26.8.1 The AIA shall not have regulations concerning coaches coaching their own school teams during the summer vacation period. Summer vacation shall be identified as beginning with the last day of school and extending to the first day of permissive football practice for each Conference.
- 26.8.2 Coaches may coach their own teams and/or team members beyond the first day of permissive football practice, providing the team is participating in a summer league play-off game or tournament.
- 26.8.3 Coaches / Players - Game participation outside the season of sport between coaches and players of a single school for fund raising or entertainment purposes will not jeopardize the eligibility of any high school player.

26.9 SCHOOL EQUIPMENT

- 26.9.1 The only school equipment which may be used out-of-season is weightlifting equipment and the playing field, which includes bases, home plate and pitcher's rubber.
- 26.9.2 School Transportation During Summer - School provided transportation for summer activities is a local option.

26.10 TOURNAMENTS - REGION / STATE26.10.1 Region Tournaments

- 26.10.1.1 Regional qualifiers for the state tournament shall be determined by each Conference.

26.10.2 State Tournaments

NOTE: See Article 12 for additional state tournament rules.

26.10.2.1 Dates and Sites

- 26.10.2.1.1 Conferences may recommend the dates and sites of state tournaments.

- 26.10.2.1.2 The AIA Executive Board shall determine the dates and sites of state tournaments.

- 26.10.2.2 There shall be a State Softball Tournament for each Conference.

- 26.10.2.3 All state tournaments shall be single elimination.

26.10.3 Awards

- 26.10.3.1 Region Tournament - Region Champion Plaques
(See Article 13, Section 13.1)

- 26.10.3.2 State Tournament - State Champion and Runner-Up Trophies;
Certificates of Excellence
(See Article 13, Section 13.1)

- 26.10.4 Practice on Site - A practice or competition on the site of the Region or State Championship Tournament, except for a regularly scheduled contest, is not permitted for seven calendar days prior to the Region or State Championship, except in the case of the host school.

*DETERMINATION: The host school may participate at the site only if that is their regular practice site.
(Ex. Bd. 10/77)*

26.10.5 Protests

- 26.10.5.1 In the event of a question or a protest during a qualifying tournament or state tournament, the decision of the Tournament Director and/or Tournament Games Committee shall be final.

- 26.10.5.2 Regular season protests, if any, will be handled as indicated in the current edition of the National Federation Softball Rules Book.