

## NEW ENGLAND ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

### Softball Rules

**ROSTER** – Teams can have up to 20 members on the roster – only 17 out of 20 members can play in one game – no more than 17 players per game.

- Teams may start with eight (8) players and add up to ten (10) once the game has started.
  - A team that starts the game with 8 or 9 players may add additional players after the game has started.
    - These players should be placed at the bottom of the line-up.
    - Teams playing with 10 or 11 players may finish the game with 8 players, but the vacated spots in the line-up will be an automatic out, regardless of the reason for the player's inability to play.
- Each team are allowed to have 2 hearing players and a hearing player is defined as Child of Deaf Adult (CODA) and/or Sibling of Deaf Adult (SODA) (according to NEAAD By-laws)

**COED ROSTER** – In addition to the ROSTER rule, all coed teams must follow the following rules ...

- 6-4 Coed Slow pitch, six (6) male and four (4) female players on the field.
- A female can be pitcher in a 6/4 format, but a male must be the catcher. The other females can play any other position, other than pitcher, without regard to specific number of infielders or outfielders being male or female, but must still have 1 female in both infield and outfield.
- Batting order in 6/4 tournament shall be no more than two (2) male batters in a row. After two (2) male batters, there must be a female batter.
- If the male batter walks, and another male batter succeeds the walked male batter in the batting order, the walked male batter would be awarded one (1) base. If a female batter succeeds the walked male batter, the male batter will be awarded two (2) bases.
- A female batter will have an option to walk (1 base) or hit only if there is two (2) outs.
- No more than six (6) male players may play defense at one time.
- If the extra player (EP) is used, a team must use two (2) extra players, one (1) male and one (1) female. These players may play defense at any time, but they must retain their original positions in the batting order. The batting order must remain the same unless a substitution is used in the offensive line-up.
- NOTE: When a team is using the extra player(s) (EP), and in the event a player or players are removed for any reason during the course of the game and no substitution is available, the player removed shall be scored as an out when his/her turn comes up in the batting order. In the event this occurs, the player immediately following the removed player is simply bypassed as a batter, but may still remain in the game as a defensive player.
- **Fielding** – There shall be a boundary line at 150 feet in the outfield. Outfielders cannot cross this boundary line until the ball is batted.

**GRACE PERIOD** – There will be no grace period for any scheduled games unless the tournament director or Commissioner grants to have a grace period.

**HOME AND VISITOR** – It will be determine by a coin flip

**HOME RUN LIMIT** – Limit 5 home runs per game (A home run is a ball hit over the fence without being touched by outfielders.) Any home run hit after the permitted amount will be ruled an OUT.

- If the outfielder made contact with fly ball that went over the fence will not be counted toward to home run limit.
- It is each team's responsibility to retrieve its own foul and home run balls. They should be returned to the home play umpire.

**TIME LIMIT** – Game length is seven innings or when there is less than 5 minutes left in the game. The only exception that if the difference of the score is 3 runs or less, they shall play 1 more inning.

- All games tied at the end of a regulation game, will be played to completion using Kansas City Tie Breaker Rule except for the championship game.

**OMAHA TIE BREAKER RULE** – If the score is tied after seven innings or the time limit expires, the offensive team will place the last official batter on second base. The next batter in the lineup will start with a 2-2 count (2 pitch) with one courtesy foul (on the first pitch only). This procedure is repeated until a winner is declared.

**COURTESY RUNNER** – There should be limit of 1 Courtesy Runner per inning for men and women division. For Co-ed Division – A Courtesy Runner may be used for 1 male and 1 female player per inning and the runner must be of the same sex.

- The runner can be anyone from the roster presented at the game. If the courtesy runner is still on the base when he/she is due up at bat will be declared OUT.
- There shall be no courtesy runner permitted at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases except for reaching base on error after umpire declared dead ball to where the batter advanced to second base on dead ball can be replaced by Courtesy Runner.

**MERCY RULE** – 15 runs after 3<sup>rd</sup> inning, 12 runs after 4<sup>th</sup> inning and 10 runs after 5<sup>th</sup> inning.

**RE-ENTRY RULE** – The re-entry rule is limited up to 3 players per game (one time re-entry and the sub will not be able to re-entry).

**FLIP/FLOP RULE** – In the inning when it reaches Mercy Rule when the home team is losing, the home team will remain at bat and become the visiting team. If the “new visiting team” does not score enough runs to avoid Mercy Rule, the game is over. If they scored enough runs to avoid Mercy Rule then the “new home team” will bat. If the “new home team” scored more runs to exceed the Mercy Rule – the game is over. If they do not score enough runs then the game will continue under the flip/flop format. If the situation reverses, the teams would flip/flop again.

- At least 15 runs difference at end of 3<sup>rd</sup> inning, flip/flop in 4<sup>th</sup> inning
- At least 12 runs difference at end of 4<sup>th</sup> inning, flip/flop in 5<sup>th</sup> inning
- At least 10 runs difference at end of 5<sup>th</sup> inning and on, flip/flop in next inning

**BALL-STRIKE RULE** – Every batter will start with 1 and 1 count with no courtesy foul. Any foul ball after second strike is considered dead regardless if the ball is caught and no runners advance.

**PITCHING** – A legal delivery shall be delivered with an underhand motion.

- a) The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left up to the judgment of the umpire who shall warn the pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, he/she shall be removed from the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.
- b) The hand shall be below the hip.
- c) The ball must be delivered with an arch and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground while not exceeding a maximum height of 10 feet from the ground.
- d) The catcher must be within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitched ball reaches the plate or until the ball is batted. PENALTY: The ball is dead, a ball is called on the batter, and a warning is given to the catcher and the defensive coach that if the catcher repeats such an act after this warning, they will be removed from the catcher's position for the remainder of that game.
- e) The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strike out or a put out made by the catcher. The pitcher has five seconds to release the next pitch.
- f) No show-boating allowed – if show-boating occurred, the pitch will be declared dead and it will be BALL with warning from umpire. If another show-boating occurred – the pitcher will be removed from its position for the rest of the game.
- g) Pitchers must wear a mask.

**BATS** – Bats must be USA Softball (ASA), NSA and/or USSSA approved.

- Anyone caught not using approved bat will be considered as illegal bat
- NOTE: Spray or Pine Tar or other approved substances may be applied to the handle of the bat to enhance the players' ability to grip the bat (i.e. Pine tar, Spray or other sticky substances). However, the application of such substances may not exceed 15 inches from the knob of the bat and at no time will such substances be applied to the barrel of the bat. PENALTY: The bat will be deemed and illegal bat
- If the batter is caught using illegal bat, the batter is ejected from the game. If the illegal bat was used in the play – the ball is dead, batter is out and ejected and all runners return to the base.

**TOURNAMENT BALLS** – The tournament will start with 2 new balls then 1 new and 1 used ball for the rest of the tournament. It has to be USSSA approved ball.

**TECHNICAL OUT** – A sanction against those teams or individuals, whose behavior is unacceptable, be the umpire judges the ejection is too severe a penalty, the umpire may use the technical out against the offending team.

- OFFENSE: If the team at bat is guilty of un-sportsmanship-like conduct the umpire may enforce an out against the team. If this is the first or second out of the inning, the game continues with batters and base runners unaffected; an additional out is simple added to the team's total. If the technical out is the third out of the inning, the next inning will resume with a fresh 1 and 1 count.
- DEFENSE: If the team in the field is guilty of un-sportsmanship-like conduct, the umpire may invoke the technical out rule by giving them an out when they come to bat.
- Two consecutive technical outs may not be assessed against the same team. At least one pitch (legal or illegal) must intervene. An ejection for any un-sportsmanship-like behavior or must be accompanied by the charging of an out against the offending team.
- **A team has the option of accepting ejection instead of receiving a technical out by informing the umpire prior to the next pitch.**

**UMPIRES** – Verbal or physical abuse by players, coaches and spectators will not be tolerated. Umpires may call forfeiture of a game if players, coaches or spectators are out of control.

- A judgment call will not change at all. Only the umpire's ruling and why it was incorrect then you may correct with protest before the next pitch.
- It should be responsibility of the coach to control the actions of his/her players and fans. Only team members on the waiver form are permitted on the team bench.
- A player ejected from the game for misconduct may be subjected to the following minimum penalties (coach will be notified with length of player's suspension).
  - 1<sup>st</sup> ejection – he/she cannot play that game
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> ejection – he/she cannot play for the rest of the tournament
  - If player(s) are ejected from the game for fighting is automatically ejected from the tournament

**MIDDLE RULE** – The middle rule was adopted during 2015 NEAAD coaches meeting and was voted again to use the middle rule for 2016 softball season.

- A batted line drive that are in flight past the pitcher's rubber toward to the pitcher to the body of the pitcher from top of his/her head to his/her feet – the batter is declared OUT, for the first time in the game. If it is the second time at any point of the game, the inning is over, regardless of number of out(s).
- It will be the umpire's jurisdiction to remove any bat when he/she feels the bat is not safe to be used in the game.

**PROTESTS** – In order to protest the game, the team coach must inform the umpire that the team wishes to protest the call along with \$50 fee. The process of the protest will be as follows:

- All games will be suspended of play while the NEAAD officers, the umpire involved in the game and both team coaches to discuss the situation. The NEAAD officers will make the final decision.
- If the protest is won, the protesting team retains the \$50. However, if the protest loses, the \$50 goes to NEAAD.

**No alcoholic beverages will be allowed in the dugouts or on the field during any NEAAD and USSSA sanctioned event.  
In event of a player using alcoholic beverages during the game in the dugout will be removed from the game.**

**NSAD RULE BOOK WILL BE USED FOR ANY RULES NOT LISTED IN THIS SHEET**

**2022 USSSA RULE BOOK WILL BE USED FOR ANY RULES NOT LISTED IN THIS SHEET AND NSAD RULES**

**PLAY BALL AND HAVE FUN DURING THE TOURNAMENT!**