



April 17, 2017

The 2017 Iowa high school softball season is fast approaching! Please review the information below in preparation for the upcoming season.

2017 SOFTBALL CLINICS

The IGHSAU is offering umpiring clinics in conjunction with Cedar Rapids Jefferson, Dallas Center-Grimes, Storm Lake and Mason City High Schools. Teams participating in these clinics will be given a free scrimmage for participating in one or both days of these clinics. In other words, a high school softball team that participates in these clinics will not be charged a scrimmage toward their three allowable scrimmages for the season.

Clinic start times are tentative at this point as schedules are being finalized but will likely be around 9:00 a.m.

The 2017 IGHSAU softball umpire clinics will be held on the following dates and locations:

Saturday, May 13

Jefferson High School, 1243 20th St SW, Cedar Rapids, IA
Mason City High School, 1700 4th St SE, Mason City, IA
South Prairie Elementary School, 500 S James St, Grimes, IA
Storm Lake Field of Dreams, 530 W 10th St, Storm Lake, IA

Sunday, May 14

Jefferson High School, 1243 20th St SW, Cedar Rapids, IA

If your high school is interested in participating in any of these scrimmages, please contact the appropriate person below.

CR Jefferson Contact:

Brian Erbe - erbe@cr.k12.ia.us or 319-533-2042

Dallas Center-Grimes Contact:

Steve Schlafke - sschlafke@gmail.com or 515-975-5453

Mason City Clinic Contacts:

Bob Horner – bhorner612@gmail.com or 641-425-2974

Karl Wooldridge - karlwooldridge88@yahoo.com or 641-590-1202

Storm Lake Clinic Contact:

Deb Richarz - deb.richarz@lemarscsd.org or 712-540-5711

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE 2017 SEASON

Monday, May 8

First high school practice and/or scrimmage permitted

Friday, May 12

Tournament availability and co-op/sharing agreement online forms due

Rules meeting and concussion course due

Monday, May 22

First high school competition permitted

Regional Tournament

1A/2A July 3, 5, 7, 10

3A July 5, 7, 10

4A/5A July 6, 8, 11

State Tournament

July 17-21

RULES BOOK/LINEUP CARD MAILING

NFHS Softball Rules Books are mailed on an every-other-year basis, and 2017 is the off-year for softball. As such, please use the 2016 NFHS Softball Rules Book for the 2017 season. Replacement books are available from the IGHSAU office at a cost of \$8 per book. Lineup cards for use during the 2017 softball season will be mailed to the athletic directors of each high school and junior high school the week of April 24. Please note that use of these particular lineup cards is not required. You may choose to use a different style of card for your contests.

2017 SOFTBALL RULES MEETING

The 2017 softball rules meeting will be available on the IGHSAU website beginning Monday, April 24. All coaches are strongly encouraged to view the meeting, and all varsity head softball coaches must complete the meeting by midnight on Friday, May 12. You are required to enter your email address and school affiliation prior to starting the meeting, and a completion certificate will be automatically sent to the email address you enter within an hour of completing the meeting.

COACHING LICENSURE & CONCUSSION TRAINING

Please be sure that all coaches working on your junior high and high school softball staff (whether paid or volunteer) are properly licensed and have completed the annual concussion training. These requirements must be completed before an individual may participate in a coaching capacity either during practice or competition. Feel free to contact Steve Mitchell at the Iowa Board of Education Examiners at Steve.mitchell@iowa.gov or 515-281-6896 if you have questions about coaching licensure status. Contact Chelsea Clark at the IHSAA if you have any questions about the online concussion course at cclark@iahsaa.org or 515-288-9741.

DEFENSIVE FACE PROTECTION

The NFHS has not mandated facemasks for defensive softball players, as a NOCSAE standard for face protection does not presently exist. Therefore, the IGHSAU encourages players, coaches, parents, and teams to consider face protection for their infielders as is permissible by NFHS softball rules.

REGIONAL TOURNAMENT HOSTING

Regional final softball games in all classes (1A – 5A) will be played on the home field of the highest ranked (based on the final regular season rankings) team remaining of the two regional final teams. A tie-breaker procedure is in place in the case of two non-ranked teams meeting in the regional final. To secure the privilege to host, sites must apply to host by Friday, May 12, have adequate lighting, and meet certain other minimum facility requirements.

DOUBLE FIRST BASE RULE

NFHS Softball Rule 8-10 will now be followed regarding the double first base. Adoption of the NFHS rule should help improve player safety and increase coach and umpire understanding and enforcement of the rule. Verbiage of the rule is as follows:

ART. 1 . . .The defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the colored portion when a play is being made on the batter-runner.

PENALTIES (Art. 1):

- 1. The batter-runner is out when there is a play being made at first base and the batter-runner touches only the white portion provided the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to touch the white or colored base.**
- 2. The batter-runner is out for interference when there is a force play and the batter-runner touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white. See Rule [8-2-5](#) Penalty.**
- 3. Obstruction is called on the defense when there is a force play on the batter-runner, who touches only the colored portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball, while also on the colored portion. See [8-4-3b](#) Penalty.**

ART. 2 . . .The offense or defense may use either the white or colored portion:

- a. On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base.
- b. On an errant throw pulling the defense off the base into foul ground.
- c. When the defensive player uses the colored portion of the double base, the batter-runner can run in fair territory when the throw is coming from the foul side of first base, and if hit by the thrown ball, it is not interference. If intentional interference is ruled, the runner is out.

ART. 3 . . .The offense or defense may touch the white or colored base:

- a. On a fair ball hit to the outfield with no play being attempted or when the runner is returning to first base.
- b. On a fly ball tag-up play.
- c. (F.P.) On an attempted pick-off play.
- d. On a base on balls.

WALK-UP MUSIC

During regular season games, music may be played over the host amplifying system in pregame, postgame, between half-innings, and during the interval in which a batter is walking to the batter's box (walk-up music). Use good judgment regarding the content and lyrics of music played. In an effort to maintain neutrality during the regional tournament, if walk-up music is played, it must be played for both teams. The visiting team must have the opportunity to submit a playlist in advance to the regional host site, and if either team chooses to not have walk-up music, it shall not be played for either team.

The umpire-in-chief of any regular season or postseason contest may order the music turned down or off if the music is inappropriate or is interfering with the orderly administration of the game.

ON-SITE ADMINISTRATOR

Often coaches serve as site administrators during home games. The Softball Advisory Committee expressed concern about this practice, as much goes unnoticed and unaddressed before, during and after a game when the coach also serves as the site administrator. The Committee strongly recommends schools have an administrator in place at the home site. Host management should identify themselves to the umpires, and should be available to escort umpires safely to and from the field, in addition to being a visible presence during game.

STATE SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT LODGING

A reminder that qualifying teams are now responsible for securing their own lodging during the state softball tournament. Iowa Central Community College will still offer lodging, but the IGHS AU will no longer act as the housing agent. ICC C contact information will be provided to qualifying teams at tournament time. The IGHS AU will continue to provide food allowance to participating teams and housing allowance to participating teams traveling more than 125 miles one-way. Please also be advised that due to a large manufacturing construction project in the area, Fort Dodge hotel space will be at a premium this summer.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AS UMPIRES

The IGHS AU Board of Directors approved the use of properly certified high school students as umpires for sub-varsity softball contests. Prior to the 2017 season, high school students could only serve as umpires for junior high contests. A high school student is now permitted to umpire a freshman, sophomore, or JV contest with a fully licensed adult umpire. The high school student must register with the IGHS AU, complete the online rules meeting, and is strongly encouraged to complete the exam and attend an in-person umpire clinic.

2017 SEASON INFORMATION

Please take the time to review with your coaching staff and players the 2017 Softball Adaptations, NFHS Rules Changes, Points of Emphasis, non-approved bat listing, and softball classification on the Softball page of the IGHS AU website. Go to www.ighsau.org, click SOFTBALL, and scroll down the page to see the aforementioned and other resources for the season.

Additionally, as you prepare for the season, please develop a plan to ensure that travel plans and contact information are communicated both as a host and when traveling. See to it that visiting teams are greeted upon arrival to your site. Ensure that the opposing team and the umpires know who the on-site administrator is each night. Have an inclement weather and other emergency evacuation plans. Communicate in advance a timeline for each date you host. A little advance planning goes a long way to ensure a smooth and successful season.

Please feel free to contact the IGHS AU office with any questions, and I will be in touch again soon.

Best,

Joel Oswald
IGHS AU Assistant Director/Softball Administrator