



IGHSAU Softball Umpire Newsletter

2018 Vol. 1



Welcome to the 2018 high school softball season!! It is my privilege to serve as the newly appointed IGHSAU umpire coordinator. This ongoing newsletter is for you and for the game. We want to ensure that we are getting information to you and that you have a way to gain or reinforce your umpire education during the pre-season and while the season is ongoing. There is a lot of information in this first edition, so please be sure to read through it all carefully and begin to prepare for your upcoming schedule.

Season Schedule

Registration with IGHSAU Rule/ Case books mailed	March 15 (to avoid late fee) Mailed by April 15	
Umpire Exam & Online Rules Meeting	Opens April 23	Closes May 31st
First Practice	Monday, May 7	
First Game	Monday, May 21	
Playing Dates	40 games (+3 scrimmages)	
Regional Dates		
1A/ 2A	July 2, 3, 6, 9	
3A	July 3, 6, 9	
4A/5A	July 5, 7, 10	
State Tournament	July 16-20	



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Umpire Clinics

You must attend an IGHSAU Softball Umpire clinic every 3 years to be eligible for post season softball. It is recommended that you attend as often as possible to continue to stay up on changes within the game.

March 19	Guthrie Center	6-9pm Classroom and Mechanics work
March 22	Valley, West Des Moines	6-9pm Classroom and Mechanics work
May 12 & 13	Cedar Rapids Jefferson	8:30am Classroom and Mechanics Work Live Games & Evaluations 3 Umpire System
Registration Cost	Register within your Arbiter account under the IGHSAU Central Hub. \$25	

Umpire Pre-Season Checklist

- ✓ IGHSAU Registration complete
- ✓ IGHSAU Umpire Exam and Online Rules Meeting complete
- ✓ Uniform inventory
- ✓ Equipment needs
- ✓ Proper uniforms for High School season
- ✓ Study and understand new rules for this season
- ✓ Review any new mechanics to be used for this season
- ✓ Update pre-game checklist for this season
- ✓ Arbiter IGHSAU Central Hub <https://ighsau.arbitersports.com/front/107730/Site>
 - Ensure your Arbiter account profile is up to date
 - Photo required on your Arbiter profile
 - Any games not assigned through Arbiter should be entered into the comments sections of that dates block
 - If you need Arbiter assistance, please contact Cathy Creighton. cathy@ighsau.org



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RULES

NFHS rules changes for 2018 season

2-65-2, 8-1-1c, 8-4-3a, 9-6-2: The coach, pitcher or catcher of the defensive team may request an intentional walk either before or during the pitch count. **Rationale:** This change to allow intentional walks was enacted to align fast pitch and slow pitch rules, to keep up with current trends of the sport, and also to maximize the flow of the game.

3-2-7c: Language was added to address the use and placement of the wristband playbook/play card and defines this item as a piece of equipment. It also addresses restrictions on color. **Rationale:** The wristband playbook/playcards are worn on the forearm and considered equipment, not a garment. Therefore, these items are not required to adhere to the color restrictions addressed in 3-2-7c.

3-2-15, 10-2-3a: This change removes the responsibility of the umpires to inspect equipment prior to the start of the game. Rule 4-1-2d already requires head coaches to verify that their players are legally and properly equipped. **Rationale:** The responsibility to verify that players are legally equipped rests with the coach and administration of the school. Rules 7-4-2 and 10-2-3l provide the authority to umpires to penalize for equipment violations.

3-7-1 NOTE, 6-2-5 NOTE 2: Added language provides umpires with the authority to allow a reasonable number of warm-up pitches to an incoming pitcher due to circumstances that require a pitcher to be removed by rule. **Rationale:** Currently there are no guidelines for warming up the incoming pitcher under these circumstances. The default number of pitches used by the umpires is 5 unless there is inclement weather. The note will give guidance to all parties involved.

6-1-2b: The pitcher may now step back with the non-pivot foot at any time prior to the start of the pitch. **Rationale:** This is a change to assist the developing pitcher. (See Iowa Adaptation below)

- ***IGHSAU Softball Adaptation #2 does not allow the pitcher to step back. Both feet MUST be in touch with the pitching plate.***



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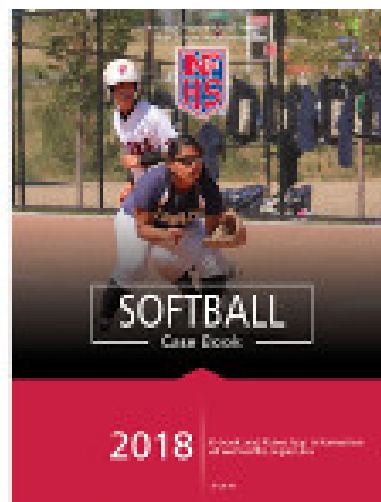
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2018 Iowa Adaptations are found on Arbiter IGHSAU Central Hub

Major Editorial Changes

3-6-12, 10-1-6: Language provides clarity and consistency for restriction of alcohol and tobacco use by participants and officials.

8-1-2: This change requires the batter to make an attempt to avoid being hit by a pitched ball in the area between the plate and the batter's box. This portion of the rule had been inadvertently omitted.





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Softball Umpire Uniform

- Our first impression. Look like an umpire and look like a crew.
- IGHSAU Recommended Uniform
 - Powder blue umpire shirt
 - The new IGHSAU logo must be worn for all Post Season assignments.
 - Heather Gray Pants
 - Navy ball bag(s)
 - Black umpire shoes
 - If Jackets are worn, they will be the same style of umpire jacket
 - Navy Blue Hat
 - The new IGHSAU logo must be worn for all Post Season assignments
- Uniform approved **Exceptions**
 - Navy blue umpire shirt may be worn during regular season games. (no logo)
 - IGHSAU White umpire shirts (with blue or red inserts) may be worn during JV or lower level games.
 - Plain Navy hat may be worn during regular season contests.
 - Any other exception would need to be approved by IGHSAU
- IGHSAU umpire apparel may be purchased from Image Sport
<http://www.imagesport.com/m-5-ighsau-officials.aspx>





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Evaluation Process

Summer of 2018 will see umpires being evaluated all across the state. This will take great cooperation between the umpires and the evaluators. Please do your part to ensure this process is successful.

Why be evaluated?

1st priority is always to improve as an umpire. The game changes, the kids are getting faster and the ball is moving much quicker. The feedback that we receive from fellow umpires or through an evaluation process should be welcomed as part of our investment to the game.

2nd Priority is for consideration for the post season. While post season assignments are based on many factors (coaches recommendations, past performance, camp and clinic attendance, etc), the best way to be on someone's radar is to be seen working and showing your skill set.

Some of you will request to be evaluated, while others of you may have an evaluator at a game or two of yours anytime during the season. While we know we cannot get out to see every umpire work, we do want to ensure that those of you that want to be seen, will be seen.

How to request to be evaluated: (recommended)

- Ensure your schedule, blocks and comments (games not scheduled through Arbiter should be in your comments section) are updated in Arbiter. We need to see your full schedule to ensure we can plan to watch you work.
- Submit your request to cathy@ighsau.org

Post Season Eligibility and Selection Criteria

- Arbiter IGHSAU Central HUB (bottom right on main page)

Officials are selected for postseason assignments based on the following criteria:

- Registered and paid for current sport season
- Viewed required online eligibility videos
- Met once-every-three-year in-person clinic requirement
- Received post-season recommendations from member schools
- Completed required Arbiter custom fields
- IGHSAU observation reports
- Assignor/commissioner recommendations
- Balance of gender, ethnicity, age, years of experience overall, years of state tournament experience, geographic location



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Umpire Resources:

NFHS Rules App (download to your device for quick / searchable reference)

NFHS 2018/2019 Rule & Case Ebook (Iphone or Android compatible)

- <http://www.nfhs.org/ebooks/>

NFHS 2018/2019 Umpire Manual

- Viewable and downloadable for **free** within your personal Arbiter account
 - Go to NFHS Central Hub, click on Publications on top tool bar, and choose softball.
- <http://www.nfhs.com/p-1021-2018-2019-softball-umpires-manual.aspx>

Ask Cathy

Questions and professional comments should be directed to the IGHSAU Softball Coordinator of Umpires Cathy Creighton at cathy@ighsau.org

General Softball inquiries

Rules interpretations

Umpire mechanics

Evaluation process

Newsletter topics

I am very excited about the progress we are making around the state in our softball umpiring and look forward to working with each of you in the future.

IGHSAU Softball Coordinator of Umpires

Cathy Creighton