ARTICLE 28

SOFTBALL
(GIRLS)

28.1 RULES

28.1.1 Official rules for girls' softball shall be those published in the current edition of the National Federation Softball Rules Book.

28.1.2 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.

28.1.3 Regulation Game, Completed Game, Suspended Game

28.1.3.1 Regulation Game – A legal game is a game that fulfils the requirements outlined in the National Federation Softball Rule Book. (4 ½ or 5 innings).

28.1.3.2 Completed Game – A completed game is a game that meets regulation game status and meets one of the following criteria:

28.1.3.2.1 Has played out the required number of innings (7)

28.1.3.2.2 Has been **called** (ended) by the umpires following a "game under suspension"

28.1.3.3 Suspension – A game under suspension is a game that has been delayed due to weather or field conditions that will be completed at a later time.

NOTE: A regular season varsity contest may not result in a tie, even if it went 5 innings. It must be played to a concluding contest win for one of the competing teams following the "**suspended**" game protocol.

28.1.3.4 Suspended Game Protocol

28.1.3.4.1 Games suspended shall be resumed at the point of interruption and played until satisfying a regulation game criterion. All lineups, substitutions, and score shall be continued from the suspended contest. Suspended games shall be replayed on the first available agreed upon date for both teams

28.1.3.4.2 A game that has gone beyond 4 ½ or 5 innings and after suspension leaves the contest in a tie, shall be resumed at point of interruption, and played until satisfying a completed game criterion. All lineups, substitutions, and score shall be continued from the suspended contest.

28.1.4 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.

28.1.5 15-Run Rule – With the agreement of both schools participating, a softball game shall end any time after four innings or after three and one-half (3-1/2) innings when a team is fifteen or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat.

28.1.6 Time Limit – No new inning shall begin after 2 hours for a non-varsity game and if necessary, the home team can complete their at bat.

28.1.7 Invitational softball tournaments may impose a time limit and/or the tie-breaker procedure described in Article 28.1.6 as procedures for ending games.

28.1.7.1 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 leadoff 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.

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28.1.8 By mutual consent of the school/teams involved, sub-varsity softball games may have a time limit of no new inning being allowed to start after the conclusion of one hour and 45 minutes. A game shall be considered regulation, no matter how many innings have been played, after one hour and 45 minutes have been played and the inning in progress when the time expires is completed or immediately when time expires if the team last at bat is batting and is ahead in score. If the game is tied when time expires and the inning in progress is completed, it will remain a tie score. If the game is tied at the end of seven (7) innings and time has not expired, the game will continue into extra innings until a winner is decided or time expires - whichever comes first. If the game is still tied when time expires in extra innings, and the inning in progress is completed, it will remain a tie score. Time shall begin at the end of the pre-game conference at home plate between coaches, captains, and umpires.

28.2 SEASON OF SPORT

28.2.1 The AIA Standardized Calendar shall be used to identify the starting week for practice, competition and the conclusion of post-season competition.

28.2.2 The season of competition for a school shall conclude with that school's last AIA sanctioned competition.

28.2.3

Spring Season	Practice	no sooner than the	32nd week
	Season of Competition	begins Wednesday of the	34th week
	Championship	to be concluded by Tuesday of the	46th week

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)

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.

28.3 PRESEASON INTERSCHOOL VARSITY SCRIMMAGE

28.3.1 One preseason interschool varsity scrimmage may be held; this scrimmage is considered a practice and shall not count toward the allowable number of games:

28.3.1.1 The varsity scrimmage shall be scheduled the week prior to the AIA date of competition; individual players must have participated in at least eight practice sessions.

28.3.1.2 The following guidelines shall be used:

- Scrimmage is open to the public, charging admission is at the discretion of the host school;
- Scoreboards shall not be used;
- No official score may be kept (recorded) or reported;
- Game uniforms may be worn; numbered jerseys may be used;
- There shall be at least two (2) AIA officials on the field;
- Unlimited substitution and re-entry of players;
- Coaching is permitted during play;
- Timeouts are unlimited;
- Other adjustments mutually agreed upon by coaches and officials before the scrimmage begins; adjustments cannot be less restrictive than the guidelines or sport policy.

28.3.1.3 Limits:
28.3.1.3.1 Scrimmage shall consist of no more than seven innings;
28.3.1.3.2 Offense and defense may switch when five runs are scored in one inning

28.3.1.4 Schools may hold multi-school scrimmages while adhering to Article 28.3.

28.4 SCHEDULES

28.4.1 If scheduling difficulties occur, schedules may be increased by one game. The additional game shall be approved by the AIA Executive Board.

28.5 NUMBER OF GAMES IN SEASON

28.5.1 No school shall schedule more than **20** varsity games, including two invitationals, which shall count as one game each.

28.5.2 No school shall schedule more than **19** junior varsity or freshman games per team.

28.5.3 No player shall participate in more than **20** softball games per season, excluding qualifying and post-season tournaments.

28.5.3.1 EXCEPTION: 3A, 2A and 1A 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 post-season 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.

28.6 CONTEST PARTICIPATION

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

28.7 INTERSCHOOL COMPETITION

28.7.1 Each team will be limited to a ten-minute warm up on the field

28.8 COACHES / COACHING

28.8.1 A coach in a coach's box must wear a helmet.

28.8.2 The AIA shall not have regulations concerning coaches coaching their own school teams outside of the AIA defined season of sport.

28.8.3 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.

28.8.4 Attendance shall be voluntary and no student athlete shall be prohibited from participating on the team for failing to attend the out-of-season activity.

28.9 SCHOOL EQUIPMENT

28.9.1 School Transportation - School provided transportation for activities is a local option.

28.9.2 School equipment outside the season of sport is a local option.

28.10 POST-SEASON TOURNAMENTS

28.10.1 Post-Season Tournaments

NOTE: See Article 12 for additional post-season tournament rules.

28.10.1.1 Dates and Sites

28.10.1.1.1 The AIA Executive Board shall determine the dates and sites of post-season tournaments.

28.10.1.2 There shall be a team post-season tournament as determined by the AIA Executive Board.

28.10.1.2.1 Schools must play a minimum of twelve (12) games in order to qualify for post season play.

28.10.1.3 All post-season tournaments may be single or double elimination as determined by the AIA Executive Board.

28.10.1.4 Post-season tournament bracketing shall be determined by the AIA.

28.10.2 No more than 22 players shall suit up, participate or be listed on a roster for a post-season tournament game.

28.10.3 Awards - The AIA shall be responsible for the purchase and standardization of all post-season tournament awards. *(See Article 13, Section 1)*.

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

DETERMINATION: The host school may practice at the site only if that is their regular practice site.

28.10.5 Protests

28.10.5.1 In the event of a question or a protest during a post-season tournament, the decision of the AIA Sports Administrator and/or Tournament Games Committee shall be final.

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

28.10.6 Unmanned aerial systems at AIA post season events

28.10.6.1 The use of unmanned aerial systems, often referred to as drones, is prohibited for any purpose by any persons at all AIA post season events. This policy includes not only the restricted playing area of the venue(s), but also the physical confines of the entire stadium/field/arena structure. For the purpose of this policy, an unmanned aerial system is any aircraft without a human pilot on board.

28.11 UNIFIED SOFTBALL – A joint effort between the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) and Special Olympics of Arizona (SOAZ) to incorporate Unified programs in AIA member schools recognizing and offering opportunities for SOAZ athletes and partners to compete in an AIA sanctioned activity. Unified Softball programs shall be administered by each participating member school and follow the requirements per AIA Bylaws for eligibility, rules and program administration, unless otherwise stated below.

28.11.1 Official rules for Unified Softball shall be those published by the SOAZ and AIA prior to each season, as approved by the AIA Executive Board. See Article 35.