



Texas Charter School Academic & Athletic League (TCSAAL)

Softball Rules & General Procedures

2026-2027 Season

RULES

TCSAAL Softball will follow the rules set forth by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS): <https://nfhs.org/sports/softball/rules>. A detailed list of [NFHS Rule Changes](#) specific to 2027 are also included on the NFHS rules webpage. The only exceptions that exist are amended by the TCSAAL rules found in this document or in our *Handbook*.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- No pass, No Play: TCSAAL requires that all students maintain at least a 70% average in all classes to participate in TCSAAL activities. As we do want to use athletics as an incentive to obtain good grades, a player can be moved to the active roster if they are passing all classes on a progress report under the individual schools system. If a player does not have a passing average, they may still remain on the team, but they are not eligible to play in games.
- Students must abide by eligibility rules and regulations as detailed in the *TCSAAL Handbook*.
- Any student can play up in grade level grouping, but they cannot play down.
- A student cannot play on multiple teams in the same activity. Please see the *TCSAAL Handbook* for more details.

FIELD DIMENSIONS

Mandated field distances will be as follows:

- i) Bases shall be 60 feet apart.
- ii) The rear tip of home plate and the front edge of the pitcher's plate shall be 43 feet.
- iii) A circle with a diameter of 16 feet shall be drawn with its center at the midpoint of the front edge of the pitcher's plate.

EQUIPMENT

TCSAAL will follow NFHS Equipment guidelines for fast pitch softball. Fast pitch utilizes the 12" ball.

Bat Requirements: The bat shall meet the 2004 ASA Bat Performance Standard, bear either the ASA 2000 Certification Mark, ASA 2004 Certification Mark, or ASA 2013 Certification Mark and not be listed on the ASA non-approved bat list as found on <https://www.usasoftball.com/certified-equipment>. Bat barrels made entirely of wood are permitted and need not bear an ASA mark, but shall not exceed 2¼ inches in diameter. Please refer to the NFHS Softball via the NFHS website for additional information on [Bat Certification Marks and USA Softball Non-Approved Bats](#).

Uniforms: The home team shall wear dark-color uniforms, and the visiting team shall wear light-color uniforms. If the home team would like to wear light uniforms, they need to inform the visiting team at least 48 hours prior to game time so they can plan accordingly.

Exception: TCSAAL will not enforce article 3 or 4 of the uniforms section concerning logos.

DURATION OF GAME

Art. i)

In all regular season games, TCSAAL will enforce the following in regard to duration of gameplay:

1. End-of-Game Procedure
 - a. For games during the regular season that are being played at a facility WITHOUT reservation restrictions and/or lighting restrictions:
 - i. A new inning cannot take place following the 1 hour 30 minute mark for 6th-8th Grade or 1 hour 45 minute mark for High School.
 - ii. At the 1 hour 30 minute mark for 6th-8th Grade or 1 hour 45 minute mark for High School, the current inning will be played out to complete the game.
 - iii. If the score is tied at the end of the inning, the score will remain tied and the game will finish with a tie score.
 - iv. In summation, end-of-game procedure will be as follows for regular season games played at facilities WITHOUT facility/lighting restrictions:
 1. 6th-8th Grade:
 - a. New innings CANNOT take place after the 1 hour 30 minute mark
 - b. Complete the inning
 2. High School:
 - a. New innings CANNOT take place after the 1 hour 45 minute mark
 - b. Complete the inning
 - b. For games during the regular season that are being played at a facility WITH reservation restrictions and/or lighting restrictions, TCSAAL games will enforce a “drop dead time regulation rule.” For 6th-8th Grade regular season games with facility/lighting restrictions, regular season games will conclude at 1 hour 45 minutes. For High School regular season games with facility/lighting restrictions, regular season games will conclude at 2.0 hours.
 - i. In summation, end-of-game procedure will be as follows for regular season games played at facilities WITH facility/lighting restrictions:
 1. 6th-8th Grade:
 - a. Games will end at the 1 hour 45 minute mark.
 2. High School:
 - a. Games will end at the 2.0 hour mark.
 - ii. Scoring rules for regular season games that are being played at a facility WITH facility/lighting restrictions that therefore require the drop dead time regulation:
 1. The score reverts back one full inning, with the exception of if the home team is up to bat when time runs out. In that case, the score stands as is. If the game is tied after time runs out while the home team is batting or after reverting back on full inning if visitors were up when time ran out, then it is declared a tie game.
2. A game cannot be started with less than 9 players. If a team of at least nine players is not present at the official start time, they will be granted a grace period of 15 minutes in which they will be able to still successfully field a team without penalty.
 - a. During the 15-minute grace period, the game will begin as soon as enough eligible players (9) are present for both teams.
 - b. If a team does not have enough players at the end of the 15-minute grace period, the game will be ruled a forfeit and the team without enough eligible players will be penalized with the loss.
3. Regular season games for Varsity Softball will have a 10-run cap per inning.
 - a. **EXCEPTION:** If the losing team is down by 10+ runs, this rule will not take effect unless the losing team retakes the lead. If a team retakes the lead after having a 10+ run deficit, their half of the inning is over.
4. Regular season games for Middle School (6th-8th Grade) Softball will have a 5-run cap per inning.
 - a. **EXCEPTION:** If the losing team is down by 5+ runs, this rule will not take effect unless the losing team retakes the lead. If a team retakes the lead after having a 5+ run deficit, their half of the inning is over.

5. TCSAAL will also enforce the following mercy rule: The game shall end if either team is behind 15 or more runs following 3 complete innings or 10 or more runs after 4 complete innings.

Art. ii)

In addition to regular season games, TCSAAL will utilize the same timing regulations / restrictions (detailed above – Art. i.) for TCSAAL playoff games, as well as run-rule per inning and mercy rule regulations.

Art. iii)

At the State Tournament, home team designation will be determined first by winning percentage, then total number of wins (if winning percentage is tied), then a coin flip (if total number of wins is tied). However, if both teams have undefeated records, the home team will be determined by a coin flip.

Art. iv)

All TCSAAL Varsity Softball games will be capped at 7 innings. All TCSAAL 6th-8th Grade Softball games will be capped at 6 innings. **Playoff games will operate off of the same timing, run-rule, and mercy rule regulations in addition to the regular season games.**

Art. v)

In all regular season games in which games end in a tie by virtue of time or inning ruling, said game will finish as a tied game. Only playoff games will result in extra innings (tie-breakers and regional/state tournaments).

UMPIRES

TCSAAL will utilize a 2-member crew. Umpire in chief (home plate) and 1 field umpire.

ROSTER DEADLINES:

The deadline to make roster changes is a specified date set by TCSAAL each school year. All roster changes must be made through your TCSAAL Regional Director before 5:00 pm on the date listed in the Roster Lock Deadline Document found on our website's Rules & Documents page.

DUGOUT DESIGNATIONS / ASSIGNMENTS

- i) For all regular season games, home teams will choose their dugout and the visiting team will take the remaining dugout.
 - a. **EXCEPTION:** For regular season games in which a team is hosting the game as the visiting team (using their own facility), said team will be able to choose their dugout.
- ii) For all playoff (tie-breaker, regional & state tournament) games, TCSAAL will assign both home and visiting team dugouts. Teams will not be able to choose their own dugouts for any reason.

NOISEMAKER REGULATIONS

Noisemakers are allowed for all outdoor activities, per NFHS regulations. **However, noisemakers that involve amplified sound (speakers, air horns, etc) are not allowed as these can interfere with gameplay and officiating communication.** Noisemakers may be removed from the spectator areas if the official deems it necessary to do so.

HOME TEAM EXPECTATIONS

The home team is responsible for keeping the official scorebook, but TCSAAL will require both teams to keep a scorebook as well as provide a line-up card for the opposing team and the umpires. The home team is also responsible for providing a scoreboard for the game. The home team is responsible for providing a digital or flip scoreboard for all of their home games if the facility scoreboard will not be available to them. Lastly, the home team is responsible for providing 1 volunteer **(minimum 18 years old)** to record on the official scorebook and 1 volunteer **(minimum 18 years old)** to update the scoreboard throughout the game.

TEAM REQUIREMENTS FOR PLAYOFF GAMES

In any playoff round, the Home Team is responsible for the Official Score Book and the Visiting Team is responsible for keeping the Official Score Board. Both these volunteers will sit at the Official Scorer's Table and they will be the only personnel at the table. If one team doesn't have a TCSAAL approved volunteer, the opposing team will be responsible for both volunteer roles. All other Regular Season requirements remain in-effect for Playoff Games other than the volunteer roles described above.

Any rules not covered in these rules will follow NFHS Rulebook.

For a complete list of the rule differences between NCAA/NFHS/USA Softball, consult the following: [2026 Softball Major Rule Differences](#)

All players, coaches, and spectators are bound by these rules and the TCSAAL Handbook.