



**Idaho High School Activities  
Association  
2026  
Softball Coaches Packet**

*unbottled.*

# 2026 Softball

## Classification — based on grades 9-12

6A	1,400 and over	3A	349-175
5A	1,399-700	2A	174 and under
4A	699-350		

## 2026 Softball Season

First day of practice	February 27
First game	March 11
District completion date	May 9
State Play-ins	May 9
State Tournament	May 14-16

\*All teams will be required to enter rosters, schedules and scores on MaxPreps.

## Game Limitations for Each Team

A team is limited to 22 games or 20 games plus one tournament, not to exceed 24 games. If a school loses a scheduled tournament game or a school is unable to attend a tournament due to reasons beyond their control, the school can reschedule lost games.

## Game Limitations for Individuals

During the regular season, athletes are permitted to play in no more than 154 innings in a 22 game schedule, or 168 in a 24 game schedule. For a game in which the score is tied at the end of seven innings, the extra innings shall be considered as an extension of the seventh inning. A contestant who exceeds the limitations of regular season participation will become ineligible for district, state or any other additional IHSAA sponsored competition of that sport.

## Rules

All Idaho contests will be played under National Federation (NFHS) Softball Rules. Rules books and case books will be distributed to school representatives at the district rules clinics.

## Idaho Rules Modifications

NFHS rules shall be followed, except as modified by the IHSAA Board of Directors. IHSAA modifications:

- Length of game:** All varsity games shall be seven innings with the exception of the 10-run rule. A game shall end any time after the fifth inning when a team is 10 or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat. This rule is in effect for all games at the state tournament. During the regular season, games may also be terminated by mutual agreement of both coaches prior to the start of the contest and acknowledged by the umpire-in-chief under the following conditions:
  - When a team is ahead by 15 runs after three innings of play.
  - When a game exceeds the time limit of 1 1/2 hours.
- Called game:** If weather or darkness causes a tied game to be called, such game shall be considered a suspended game and shall be continued from the point of suspension at a later time.
  - If a game is called before five full innings have been played and the score is not tied, such game shall also be considered a suspended game, unless the home team has scored a greater number of runs in four or four-and-a-fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns at bat, in which case it is a regulation game.
- Baseline:** The baseline shall be 60 feet.
- Ball:** A 12" ball shall be used. The yellow optic ball may be used for league play and district tournaments, and the official

ball — **Baden 2BSFPY Perfection** — will be used at all play-in and state tournament competition.

- Tie-Break procedure:** Each half-inning begins by placing a runner on second base. That runner is the player in the batting order who precedes the lead-off batter in the inning. The game then proceeds a full inning or until a winner is determined in that inning. This procedure shall start at the beginning of the eighth inning or at the game time limit previously agreed upon by both coaches.
- Double First Base:** Idaho permits the use of a double first base in all levels of play and when in use, will be governed by NFHS rules.

## Umpires

IHSAA certified umpires must be used for all interscholastic contests. Two umpires should be used at all games.

## 2026 State Tournament

Dates:	May	14-16
Sites:	6A	Coeur d'Alene HS/Lake City HS
	5A	Post Falls HS
	4A	Filer HS
	3A	Timberlake HS/Lakeland HS (Kellogg HS host)
	2A	Genesee HS

## Number of Participants

At play-in and state tournament games, a maximum of seventeen players may be in uniform at the start of the contest. Violation of this rule will result in the school being assessed a maximum fine for dressing more than the approved number of players at a state play-in or tournament game with forfeiture of the game if excess numbers play. All classifications will be allowed four coaches and three support personnel to be admitted without an IHSAA card or tournament pass. Any coaches or support personnel exceeding that number must have either an IHSAA card or purchase a tournament pass.

## Determining Home Team

At state play-in games, the home team shall be determined by the flip of a coin. At the state tournament, the highest seeded team shall be the home team (with exceptions for Game #15 if necessary). The home team dugout shall be determined by the site manager.

## Home Run Fence

When state fast pitch tournaments are held at fields that do not meet NFHS standard distance for the home run fence, a fence shall be installed at 210', if possible.

## Inclement Weather Procedure for State

In the event the state tournament cannot take place in its scheduled format, the following procedure will be used:

- All modifications will be handled in accordance with IHSAA Rule 20.
- All games will use Idaho Rules Modifications 1a and 1b.
- Alternate sites, if available, must be within reasonable distance to the original site so as not to incur additional travel/lodging costs for teams that have traveled.
- Games will be shortened to 5 innings until the original game schedule can be resumed.
- All games on the consolation side of the bracket will be cancelled. Championship semifinal games will be 5 innings.
- The length of championship games will be determined by the host site manager and the IHSAA.
- If more than 4 teams remain in the tournament, and it is not possible to get the games in, the tournament may be cancelled.

NOTE: It is very possible that not all classifications will make the same decisions at each step of the protocol above.

### 2026 Softball Representation

6A		5A		4A	
I	1.5	I-II	1	I	.5
III	4.5	III	2	III	2.5
V-VI	2	IV	2	IV	1.5
		V	1	V	2
		VI	2	VI	1.5
3A		2A			
I-II	2	II	2*		
III	2	III-IV	2*		
IV-V	1.5	*plus next two best MaxPreps seeds			
VI	2.5				

### State Play-ins

#### 6A Play-in

1B                   McCall-Donnelly HS  
           1:00 p.m. (MT)  
 3E                   Sat., May 9

#### 4A Play-in

1A                   Moscow HS  
           1:00 p.m. (PT)  
 3C                   Sat., May 9

#### 4A Play-in

4B                   Blackfoot HS  
           1:00 p.m.  
 6B                   Sat., May 9

#### 3A Play-in

4-5B               Blackfoot HS  
           1:00 p.m.  
 6C                   Sat., May 9

### 2026 Bracketing

Qualifying teams will be seeded into the state bracket according to the final rankings through and including all regular season and district tournament games. The high seed is considered the home team for all games in the tournament (with exceptions for Game #15 if necessary).

#### 6A-3A:

#1 Seed

#8 Seed

#4 Seed

#5 Seed

#3 Seed

#6 Seed

#2 Seed

#7 Seed

#### 2A:

#4 Seed

#1 Seed  
*(first round bye)*

#5 Seed

#3 Seed

#2 Seed  
*(first round bye)*

#6 Seed

# Softball Rules Changes - 2026

Wed Jul 09 2025

**1-9-6:** No player shall transmit or record audio or video from the playing surface. New language further clarifies the use of electronic devices and what is not permitted.

**Rationale:** This change clearly defines the types of electronic devices prohibited by the rule.

**Rule 8:** Rule 8 has been reformatted for clarity. Changes have separated longer articles, and organized exceptions, penalties, and effects into outline format for improved comprehension.

**Rationale:** Added article references to PENALTIES and EFFECTS, and Section 4 was separated into two sections addressing runners entitled to advance with and without liability to be put out to delineate differences.

**10-4-2:** Umpires have the option of wearing heather gray, charcoal gray, or navy blue slacks. Effective January 1, 2027, heather gray slacks will no longer be permitted as part of the umpire's uniform.

**Rationale:** Manufacturers have discontinued producing heather gray umpire pants. This change will assist umpires in the purchase of pants that are currently being manufactured.

## 2026 SOFTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-6, 2-25-3, 3-2-3a &b, 4-3-2, 7-1-1, 7-2-2, 8-2-4 EXCEPTION, 8-2-12 PENALTY 2, 8-5-2 PENALTIES 1 & 2, 8-7-14 PENALTY 2, 8-7-16 PENALTY 2, 8-9-15c, 8-9-15 PENALTIES

## 2026 SOFTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Obstruction
2. Maintaining an Unobstructed View

## IHSAA Coaches Code of Ethics

**The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. Interscholastic programs should be designed to promote citizenship and enhance the academic mission of the school.**

### **The Coach Will**

- Be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.
- Uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. The coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct. The coach/school will honor contracts regardless of possible inconvenience or financial loss.
- Master the contest rules and shall teach them to his or her team. The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
- Demonstrate respect and support for officials. The coach shall not indulge in conduct, which would incite players or spectators against the officials. The coach will not make statements concerning officials' decisions after a game.
- Work with school faculty to promote overall educational growth of the student. The coach shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give student-athletes special consideration.
- Honor the commitment to student based programs that supplement the educational growth of each student-athlete.
- Be professional in association with other coaches. The coach should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for the event before and after the contest.
- Exert his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship of all extracurricular activities.
- Cooperate with different media sources in an appropriate manner that promotes all aspects of the sport, school and community. Public criticism of officials, opponents or players is unethical.
- Uphold all policies and procedures of the school, district, IHSAA and the National Federation.



## IHSAA Coach Education

The Idaho High School Activities Association is committed to the promotion of coaches' education programs as well as providing resources toward continuing education for all of Idaho's coaches.

### ✓ **Requirements for Idaho Interscholastic Coaches**

#### **ALL COACHES**

- CPR/1<sup>st</sup> Aid Certification (current certification)
- St. Luke's Concussion Course (fall of even numbered years)
- NFHS Sudden Cardiac Arrest Course (fall of even numbered years)
- NFHS Student Mental Health & Suicide Prevention (fall of even numbered years)

#### **NON-CERTIFIED TEACHER**

- NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching (Head Coaches Only)
- NFHS Teaching & Modeling Behavior

#### **CHEER/DANCE/MUSIC/DRAMA/ADMINISTRATION**

- NFHS Understanding Copyright & Compliance

#### **POLE VAULT COACHES**

- NFHS Coaching Pole Vault

### ✓ **NFHS/IHSAA Educational Recommendations for Idaho Interscholastic Coaches**

- Complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course (prior to coaching)
- Complete necessary courses to become an NFHS LEVEL 1 Coach within the first year
- Maintain current certification in AED and 1<sup>st</sup> Aid Safety
- Complete online courses or professional development specific to the sport in which they are an interscholastic coach
- Know the playing rules of their sport(s) and understand state association rules and policies governing their sport
- Pursue NFHS Certified LEVEL 3 credential within two years
- Read, understand and agree to the national and state Coaches Code of Ethics



**IHSAA**

IDAHO HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

## **IHSAA and MaxPreps Partnership FAQ**

### **IHSAA and MaxPreps Partnership Background**

The IHSAA has partnered with MaxPreps to efficiently collect schedules, scores, rosters and team photos, to highlight member school information. MaxPreps' industry leading platform provides schools with various desktop, tablet and mobile options to keep their team information accurate. Once team information is submitted to MaxPreps it will be automatically made available to the IHSAA.

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#### **--- Frequently Asked Questions**

- 1. What do coaches need to do?** In order to accurately manage important IHSAA initiatives, coaches are required to enter their team rosters and team photos on MaxPreps. Coaches are also required to enter their scores into MaxPreps immediately after each game throughout the season to help compile accurate regular-season standings and statewide leaderboards and post-season seeding.
- 2. How do coaches sign up to get free access to their administrative account on MaxPreps for the first time?** Coaches or Athletic Directors can follow [this link](#) to become a MaxPreps member and follow the prompts to request their unique access code. Your one-time access code will identify you as the coach or AD with permission to your team/school account. You can enter this access code in the "Set up Admin Accounts" link of your member account profile page.
- 3. Can coaches allow a team statistician or assistant coach to help manage their team information?** Yes! Once the coach has access to their team admin page, they can give other individuals access to their page to help keep their team information accurate.
- 4. What if I already have a MaxPreps account?** Coaches and ADs with an existing account will simply need to continue submitting information.
- 5. What do Athletic Directors need to do?** Athletic Directors simply need to clearly communicate with coaches to keep their scores and other team information updated on MaxPreps. ADs should direct any new coaches or coaches currently not using MaxPreps to contact MaxPreps at 800-329-7324 x1 or [support@maxpreps.com](mailto:support@maxpreps.com), to sign up immediately.
- 6. Can Athletic Directors control their MaxPreps team pages, if desired?** Yes. Athletic Directors can control every single team page from their free "School Administration" page on MaxPreps. While MaxPreps recommends coaches are responsible for their own team information, MaxPreps provides 100% free reporting, communication and school management tools for athletic directors, if desired. In order to gain access to your school administration page, please contact MaxPreps at [support@maxpreps.com](mailto:support@maxpreps.com), to sign up today.



**IHSAA**

IDAHO HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

7. **Which sports are included in the partnership?** At this time, football, girls' volleyball, boys' and girls' basketball, boys' and girls' soccer, baseball and softball are included for score and statistics entry. All sports are required to enter team rosters and team photos.
8. **What about other sports?** Coaches from any other sports may still choose to use MaxPreps' free platform.
9. **Is MaxPreps compatible with other stat programs?** In addition to MaxPreps' own mobile, tablet and desktop tools, MaxPreps is compatible with more than 80 different stat companies across multiple sports.
10. **Does MaxPreps have an app to manage team information?** Yes! An app called Teams by MaxPreps is coming soon and will be available to download for both iPhone and Android devices. ADs and Coaches will be able to communicate directly with athletes and parents, sync their game schedule to their phone's calendar, enter complete schedules, rosters, scores, stats and more. Visit [maxpreps.com/teams](http://maxpreps.com/teams) for more information.
11. **How can fans participate with their teams?** This season the IHSAA is encouraging all teams to assign Official Team Reporter responsibilities to a trusted program volunteer. The **MaxPreps fan app** allows the program volunteer to provide live scoring updates on their mobile device during the game, to keep your high school community engaged and informed. All scores and updates will be available statewide on the IHSAA Scoreboard. The app is available for [iOS devices](#) and [Android devices](#).
12. **What do I label my game type as?** All games should be labeled as conference, non-conference, conference tournament or tournament. **Do not label games as “playoff”.** **In Idaho, the state tournament games are considered “playoffs”.**
13. **What is the consequence for school's that do NOT enter game results/scores?** All regular season and district tournament game scores must be entered by each member school on MaxPreps by midnight, Pacific Time, on the Saturday preceding the state tournament. Schools that fail to meet this deadline will be fined \$1,500 per sport. Any scores submitted or modified after the deadline will not be included in the final rankings.
14. **Who can I contact with additional questions?** Coaches and ADs may contact MaxPreps Idaho representative Alisa Dancer at [alisa.dancer@playonsports.com](mailto:alisa.dancer@playonsports.com), or may direct questions to MaxPreps coach support at [support@maxpreps.com](mailto:support@maxpreps.com), or 800-329-7324 x1. MaxPreps also has a support website at [support.maxpreps.com](http://support.maxpreps.com) that can help answer specific questions such as how to enter a schedule or a roster, or how to upload a team photo, etc.



## MaxPreps Rankings

IHSAA State tournament brackets for girls' soccer, boys' soccer, volleyball, girls' basketball, boys' basketball, baseball and softball will be seeded using MaxPreps Final Idaho Rankings.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Do playing out of state school effect the rankings?

- There is no difference in playing a team from your state or an out of state opponent. We do not use the state played for in the calculation. You will want to make sure that the opponent school has an up to date schedule on MaxPreps but that goes with any team you play. If an opponent's schedule is not up to date, reach out to Alisa Dancer, [alisa.dancer@playonsports.com](mailto:alisa.dancer@playonsports.com) or 530-957-1575 to get the schedule fixed.

#### Does playing a lower or higher division team have any impact on the rankings?

- MaxPreps rankings does not take into account the division or league a team is playing in. Playing a 5A school is the same as playing a 2A. Playing a school **ranked** lower than you and losing could hurt your ranking.

#### What is the rating?

- Calculated using your win/loss and quality of win. Quality of win is based on where your opponent is ranked and if you won or lost.

#### What is the strength of schedule?

- Is the average rating of all your opponents.

#### Is there a Margin of Victory?

- Yes, each sport has a small margin of victory. Should you run up the score? No, it is capped and does not have a high impact on your rating.
- Margin of Victory maximums for each sport:
  - Baseball – 10 runs
  - Basketball – 20 points
  - Football – 21 points
  - Soccer – 5 goals
  - Softball – 10 runs

## Do forfeits count?

- **No-Fault** Forfeits (both school administrations agree that the game can't be played) do NOT count in the rankings. **Do not select the forfeit button**. Game can be deleted from schedule.
- **At-Fault** Forfeits (one school violates a rule and/or contract to participate) count in the rankings and should be entered with a game score that is the maximum margin of victory per sport. If you do win as an "At-Fault" forfeit mark the score as – Football 21-0, Volleyball 3-0, Soccer 5-0, Basketball 20-0, Softball and Baseball 10-0. If the District Board of Control determines a breach of contract has occurred, schools will enter a "forfeit" into MaxPreps or Track Wrestling, whichever is applicable.

## What is the consequence for school's that do NOT enter game results/scores?

- All regular season and district tournament game scores must be entered by each member school on MaxPreps by midnight, Pacific Time, on the Saturday preceding the state tournament. Schools that fail to meet this deadline will be fined \$1,500 per sport. Any scores submitted or modified after the deadline will not be included in the final rankings.

MaxPreps rankings are run twice a week. Each time it is run, it starts from the beginning of the season. If a team you played is ranked high at the beginning of the season and they lose their best player and start losing games, their rating could drop along with yours if you played them.

The more games you play helps but you can still be ranked high even if you are playing less games than your opponents. Especially if you are winning the games you do play.

**Coaches and ADs may contact MaxPreps Idaho representative Alisa Dancer at [alisa.dancer@playonsports.com](mailto:alisa.dancer@playonsports.com) or 530-957-1575**



## GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING CONTESTS DURING **LIGHTNING DISTURBANCES**

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a default policy to those responsible for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of contests based on the presence of lightning.

### **Proactive Planning**

1. Assign staff to monitor local weather conditions before and during events.
2. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby shelters.
3. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
  - a. When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
  - b. Thirty-minute rule: Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
  - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
4. Hold periodic reviews for appropriate personnel.

For more detailed information, refer to the *Guidelines for Lightning Safety* section contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).