

VHSL SOFTBALL GAME ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS

- A) **Courtesy Runner Rule** (NFHS Softball Rules) is as follows:
1. *The team at bat may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and/or the catcher at any time. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave the game under such circumstances. The same courtesy runner may not run for both the pitcher and catcher in the same half inning or any time during the game.*
 2. *In the top of the first inning only, the pitcher and catcher are identified as those players listed on the lineup as the pitcher and catcher. Thereafter, the pitcher and catcher are identified as the last players who physically played that position on defense.*
 3. *Players who are currently in the game or have participated in the game in any other playing capacity are ineligible to serve as courtesy runners.*
 4. *A player may not be a substitute for any player in the half inning that she ran as a courtesy runner. (Exception: If an injury or disqualification occurs and no substitutes are available, the courtesy runner must be used as a substitute, and take the place of the injured player. Should the courtesy runner be on base, and is entered as a substitute, the pitcher or catcher for whom the courtesy runner is running must run in her place.)*
 5. *The courtesy runner is not permitted to run as a courtesy runner for the Designated Hitter (DH) if the DH is batting for the pitcher or catcher.*
 6. *Once the courtesy runner is designated for that half-inning, the pitcher or catcher for whom she is running may not return to run while that courtesy runner is on base. A courtesy runner cannot run for a courtesy runner. (Exception: Should an injury or disqualification occur to any offensive player, and no substitutes are available, the courtesy runner must take the place of the injured player. In this case, the courtesy runner enters as a substitute and the pitcher or catcher for whom the courtesy runner is running must run in her place.)*
 7. *A courtesy runner must be reported to the plate umpire. If a courtesy runner fails to report, she is considered to be an unreported substitute.*

- B) **The Fifteen-Run Rule** may be used only in district games **if the district council has adopted this rule.**

*(From the VHSL Handbook) **79-1-2 Fifteen-Run Rule**-Each district council has the authority to adopt the Fifteen-Run Rule for its district competition. The Fifteen-Run Rule provides that all games shall end after five innings if a team is behind by 15 or more runs and has completed its term at bat.*

- C) **The Suspended Game Rule** may be used only in regular season district games **if, prior to the start of the season, the district council has adopted this rule.** Otherwise, rule (D) below applies. Find out **BEFORE** the game if the district has adopted the Suspended Game Rule (resume play from point of interruption).

Suspended Game Rule (VHSL Policy Manual 79-4-2(1)) -- *A game called for any reason where a winner cannot be determined, or any game called at any time for mechanical failure (i.e., artificial lights, water systems, etc.) will be treated as a suspended game. The game will be continued from the point of suspension, with the lineup and batting order of each team exactly the same as the lineup and batting order at the moment of suspension subject to the rules of the game.*

- D) **Ending a Regular Season Game** --
1. If a regulation called game ends in a tie score, the game shall be counted as one-half game won and one-half game lost. Tie games shall not be completed or made up even by mutual agreement.
 2. If during a regular season game, darkness, rain, or other cause interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire, it is a regulation game if:
 - a) five full innings have been played or if the team second at bat has scored an equal or greater number of runs in 4 or in 4 and a fraction terms at bat than the opponent has scored in 5 terms at bat; or

- b) play has gone beyond five full innings. However, if play has gone beyond five full innings and the game is called before both teams have had an equal number of completed terms at bat, the score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed terms at bat; except that if the home team in its half of the incomplete inning scores a run(s) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, the final score shall be recorded when the game is called.
- E) **Ending a Tournament Game** -- If during a district, regional or state tournament game, darkness, rain or other cause interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire, it is a regulation game if:
1. five full innings have been played or if the team second at bat has scored a greater number of runs in 4 or in 4 and a fraction terms at bat than the opponent has scored in 5 terms at bat; or
 2. play has gone beyond five full innings. However, if play has gone beyond five full innings and the game is called before both teams have had an equal number of completed terms at bat, the score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; except that if the home team in its half of the incomplete inning score a run(s) which exceeds the opponent's score, the final score shall be recorded when the game is called.
- It is **not** a regulation game if the game is called before completion of the number of innings and conditions specified in (1) and (2) above, in which case the game shall be a suspended game and shall be continued from the point of interruption at the time, date and site designated by the tournament director. The line-up and batting order of each team shall be exactly the same as the line-up and batting order at the moment of suspension, subject to the rules governing the game.
- F) **5 Inning Doubleheaders** - Schools may, by mutual agreement, schedule 5-inning doubleheaders.
- G) **Games may not be ended or shortened in any way other than those described above** (except in the case of a true emergency). For example, a game may NOT be shortened to 3 innings, regardless of the score, nor may a game be ended after a specified time limit.
- H) **Double First Base** - Is permitted.
- I) **Tie-Breaker Procedure** – see below

SOFTBALL TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURE

At its March 12, 2003 meeting, the VHSL Executive Committee voted to allow Districts to adopt the NFHS Softball Tie-Breaking Procedure beginning in the 9th inning of any regular season contest. The tie-breaking procedure (often referred to as the "International" or "Olympic" tie-breaker) is as follows:

"While using the tie-breaker, 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 that inning. Then the game proceeds a full inning or until a winner is determined in that inning."

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- ◆ Districts must vote to adopt the tie-breaker or it cannot be used.
- ◆ The tie-breaker is for regular season contests only. This procedure may NOT be used in District, Region, or State Tournament play.
- ◆ The tie-breaker (if adopted) is implemented beginning with the first batter in the 9th inning.
- ◆ The player who starts the inning on 2nd base (in the 9th and any subsequent innings) is the player in the batting order who precedes the lead-off batter in that inning. This is not necessarily the person who made the last out in the prior inning (see example below).

- ◆ The tie-breaking procedure is played in complete innings -- it is not "sudden death."
- ◆ If your District adopts the tie-breaking procedure, PLEASE contact your local commissioner of officials so that they are in the loop!

EXAMPLE

District A has adopted the tie-breaking procedure. In a regular season game between the Falcons and the Eagles, the game is tied 2-2 at the end of eight complete innings. The Eagles are the home team. A recap of the 8th inning is as follows:

In the top of the 8th inning, the first batter for the Falcons, the #8 batter in the batting order, reached first base on an error by the Eagles right fielder. The second batter (#9 in the batting order) struck out. The third batter in the inning (#1 in the batting order) bunted safely, advancing the runner (#8 in the batting order) from 1st to 2nd. The next batter (fourth batter in the inning, #2 in the batting order) struck out. The fifth batter (#3 in the batting order) hit a grounder to the shortstop, who tagged the runner going from 2nd to 3rd (#8 batter in the order) for the third out.

In the bottom of the 8th, the first three batters for the Eagles (#7, #8, and #9 in the batting order) struck out.

The top of the 9th inning will begin with the Falcons' #4 batter at the plate, and the #3 batter on 2nd base. Once the top of the inning is complete, whether or not the Falcons score, the Eagles will bat. The Eagles will have their #1 batter at the plate and their #9 batter on 2nd base. If the Eagles score, the game is over. If the Eagles do not score, additional inning(s) will be played using the tie-breaking procedure. The runner who starts the inning on 2nd base will always be the batter in the batting order who precedes the lead-off batter for that inning.