2027 AIA State Softball

TOURNAMENT GUIDE

Schedule, Rules, Regulations, Instructions

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AIA Member schools competing in Softball.

1A: https://www.azpreps365.com/teams/softball/1a
2A: https://www.azpreps365.com/teams/softball/2a
3A: https://www.azpreps365.com/teams/softball/3a
4A: https://www.azpreps365.com/teams/softball/4a
5A: https://www.azpreps365.com/teams/softball/5a
6A: https://www.azpreps365.com/teams/softball/6a

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State Tournament Qualifying

6A (16-team bracket): In order to qualify, a school must have played a minimum of 12 power ranked games. Teams ranked No. 1 through No. 8 according to the AIA rankings powered by MaxPreps will earn an automatic bid to the state tournament. The conference play-in tournament will match up teams No. 9 through No. 24. Teams ranked No. 1 through No. 8, along with the eight winning teams from the conference play-in tournament, will make up the 16-team state tournament. The state tournament bracket will be seeded according to overall ranking of the 16 teams. The state tournament will consist of four rounds and be double elimination until a single championship game.

- 6A: Teams ranked Nos. 1-8, and eight (8) conference play-in winners

5A, 4A: (16-team bracket): In order to qualify, a school must have played a minimum of 12 power ranked games. Teams ranked No. 1 through No. 8 according to the AIA rankings powered by MaxPreps will earn an automatic bid to the state tournament. The conference play-in tournament will match up teams No. 9 through No. 24. Teams ranked No. 1 through No. 8, along with the eight winning teams from the conference play-in tournament, will make up the 16-team state tournament. The state tournament bracket will be seeded according to overall ranking of the 16 teams. The state tournament will consist of four rounds and be single elimination for the first round, double elimination for the quarterfinals and semifinals, and a single championship game.

- 5A, 4A: Teams ranked Nos. 1-8, and eight (8) conference play-in winners

3A (16-team bracket): In order to qualify, a school must have scheduled a minimum of 12 power ranked games. Based on region standings, the top **two (2)** teams in each region will earn an automatic bid at a minimum to the conference play-in tournament except for the North Region. The two finalists in the North Region tournament will earn the region's top bids to at minimum the conference play-in tournament The conference play-in tournament will matchup teams ranked No. 9 through No. 24. Teams ranked No. 1 through No. 8 according to the AIA rankings powered by MaxPreps, along with the eight winning teams from the conference play-in tournament will make up the 16-team state tournament. The state tournament bracket will be seeded according to the overall rankings of the 16 teams. The state tournament will consist of four rounds and be single elimination.

- 3A: Teams ranked Nos. 1-8, and eight (8) conference play-in winners.

2A (16-team bracket): In order to qualify, a school must have played a minimum of 12 power ranked games. Based on region standings, the top **two (2)** teams in each region will earn an automatic bid at minimum to the conference play-in tournament. The conference play-in tournament will match up team's ranked No. 9 through No. 24. Teams ranked No. 1 through No. 8, according to the AIA rankings powered by MaxPreps, along with the eight winning teams from the conference play-in tournament, will make up the 16-team state tournament. The state tournament bracket will be seeded according to overall ranking of the 16 teams. The state tournament will consist of four rounds and be single elimination.

- 2A: Teams ranked Nos. 1-8, and eight (8) conference play-in winners

1A (16-team bracket): In order to qualify, a school must have played a minimum of 12 power ranked games. Based on region standings, the top **two (2)** teams in each region will earn an automatic bid to the state tournament. Each region's regular season champion will be guaranteed a first-round home game. The state tournament bracket will be seeded according to the overall ranking of the 16 teams and be reseeded, if necessary, to accommodate for region champions to host a first-round game. The state tournament will consist of four rounds and be single elimination.

- 1A: Eight (8) automatic bids, and eight (8) at-large qualifiers

STATE SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP INFORMATION:

For information regarding the following AIA State Softball Tournament information, go to the link provided below:

- Neutral Site Locations
- State Tournament Schedules
- Admission Fees
- AIA365.com Live Streaming of games

https://www.azpreps365.com/championships/softball

Brackets: For up-to-date conference bracket information, click on the following link:
https://azpreps365.com/brackets/softball

GAME RULES

Rules shall be those of the current National Federation Softball Rule Book, the AIA Constitution and Bylaws and these tournament instructions.

COACHES/COACHING

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

TEAM ROSTER

28.10.2 A team roster of no more than twenty - two (22) players shall constitute a team.

TEAM UNIFORMS

The home team is to wear white or light colored uniforms and the away team is to wear dark colored uniforms if available.

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 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 "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.

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 leave 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.

TEN RUN RULE
A softball game shall end any time after four and one-half (4 ½) innings when a team is ten (10) or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat.

DUGOUTS – At Neutral Site

- Home team shall be on the side of third base. Visiting team shall be on the side of first base.
- Due to liability, non-varsity team members nor any children under high school age may not be on the field or in the dugout.

GAME BALLS

- Official AIA softball is the Wilson Fast Pitch SST (A9011BSST) and must be used at all AIA State Tournament games.

OFFICIAL SCORE BOOK

- The official score book will be that of the home team.

REPORTING RESULTS
It is the responsibility of the HOST SCHOOL to report all tournament results immediately utilizing an electronic score reporting tool as designated by the AIA Executive Bord in team sports.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES:
The basic responsibility of the host school is to take every possible measure at any athletic or nonathletic activity to assure courteous, friendly, safe, and fair treatment to visiting players, school representatives, fans, and game officials per AIA bylaw; article 2.4.

CONTROL OF SPECTATOR BEHAVIOR
During all post season and/or play-off competition held at a neutral site an administrator or administrator's designee from each participating school shall be in attendance per AIA bylaw; article 2.4.2.2. Note: Please check in with the AIA Site Director at the game location upon arrival.

The National Federation of High School Associations disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended to embarrass, ridicule, or demean others under any circumstances.

AIA Bylaw; Article 16.3.4 In the event that spectators, parents, or other non-school personnel that initiate or use profanity in cheers or cheers having the intent of sounding profane, single out opposing players personally and/or heckle them by directing derogatory or profane statements or chants at them, use racist remarks, direct offensive cheers /chants at opposing cheering sections, or engage in physical conflict or other threatening or aggressive behavior with school personnel, officials, players, coaches or other spectators , the school (s) involved shall utilize all available law enforcement resources to prosecute such offenders, and shall take all reasonable actions to help ensure that future similar incidents do not occur, such as temporarily or permanently prohibition the offenders from attending future contest.

Any spectator conduct that becomes unruly or interferes with the orderly progress of the game will result in the suspension of the game until offending spectator(s) are removed from the game site. No artificial **noise makers** are permitted at state playoff venues. If these items are brought into a game site, the items will be confiscated. In

addition, the playing of music/sound effects shall only be permitted during pregame, time-outs, intermission, and post-game and will be under the control of the site game announcer.

Any signs brought into an AIA playoff facility must be approved by the site director at entry.

EMERGENCY/MEDICAL HOST SITE REQUIREMENTS

- **Every school must have an emergency action plan in place and submitted to the AIA in order to host a** post season tournament. Please go to link for the **Anyone Can Save A Life - Emergency Action Plan** at: http://aiaonline.org/files/14196/tournaments-anyone-can-save-a-life-policy.pdf

Per AIA Executive Board approved policy, AIA Member schools must engage a qualified medical professional (QMP) or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for all AIA State Softball games at high seed site locations.

At all AIA managed State Softball games at neutral site locations, the AIA has the responsibility to engage a qualified medical professional (QMP) or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) at the neutral site.

IF THERE IS NO QMP OR EMT AT THE GAME, THE GAME WILL NOT BE PLAYED.

QMP means:

- **ATC - Certified Athletic Trainer**
- **MD - Medical Doctor**
- **DO - Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine**
- **NP - Licensed Nurse Practitioner**
- **PA - Licensed Physician's Assistant**

(QMP as defined by Arizona Revised Statute 15-341)

- If a school does not have a QMP or EMT and the opposing school does, in order for the game to proceed, the QMP or EMT agrees to cover the opposing school as well as their own school.

Method of Payment for QMP/EMT:

- Refer to http://aiaonline.org/about/procedures-manual QMP/EMT Coverage/Protocol instructions.
- *NOTE: If ONLY an EMT is at the game, any player removed due to suspected head injury or concussion will not be allowed to enter or re-enter the game based on an EMT evaluation. Return to play or practice can only be based on evaluation by a QMP (Arizona Revised State Statute 15-341).*

- Required 72 hours' Notice:
  - If you are unable to provide for a Qualified Medical Professional (MD, DO, and Physician's Assistant, Nurse Practitioner or Certified Athletic Trainer) or an EMT to be at your game, please contact AIA Office Assistant Jessica Garcia (602-385-3810 X206) (jegarcia@aiaonline.org) for assistance.

Postseason Broadcasting

All schools have the opportunity to broadcast postseason events. However, schools that utilize the Pixelate automated camera system and/or produce broadcasts as part of the NFHS Network Student Broadcast Program (SBP) will have exclusivity. First rights belong to the home/host schools on the NFHS Network. Second rights belong to visiting schools or third parties that broadcast onto the NFHS Network when the home/host school is not on the Network. Third rights belong to non-Network entities that broadcast onto a platform other than the NFHS Network.

Schools will be allowed to broadcast the first two postseason rounds in any bracketed sport, and anything that is not the state championship in individual sports. Additionally, schools may broadcast any declined events by the NFHS Network. For any school broadcasts that will not be on the NFHS Network, please fill out the Media Rights Agreement and send it in prior to the deadline date listed on it. Rights fees will apply. Please wait until after postseason pairings have been announced before sending the form in.

- The NFHS Network will directly broadcast all state semifinal and championship games, and the track & field championship finals.
- Home/host athletic directors must not allow broadcasts to take place at their facilities without an executed Media Rights Agreement sent to them ahead of time.
- Radio/audio only broadcasts will be free and allowed throughout all rounds of the postseason. A Media Rights Agreement must be filled out for this type of broadcast as well.

2026-27 Softball Media Recommendations

- Media will be required to stay outside the fenced areas of the field. Media should be allowed on the field for interviews after the conclusion of the event.
- The dugout and press box will be off limits to all non-team personnel. Media should keep stats themselves to the best of their abilities. If stats are needed after an event, one member of the home team should be identified as the person to provide that information. This meeting should take place either outside the press box or on the field following the conclusion of the event. An area just outside each team's dugout would be ideal to conduct interviews. Host administrators have the right to keep media off the field at all times and allow interviews to be conducted outside the fenced areas. Schools will be asked to keep all their players and coaches nearby for a few minutes allowing media to identify potential interviews.
- Broadcasts of the event are recommended to be placed outside the press box, at a safe distance from other broadcasts, working media and fans, and have access to power.
- Media looking to cover an event must contact the home/host athletic director and athletic secretary notifying that outlet is wanting to cover the event.

Member school contact info can be found at http://aiaonline.org/schools.

Once again, please remember to download the AIA Approved Media and AIA School Media lists to use at the gates for signing in the media and school media. **Site Director:**

- For postseason rounds of AIA state championships, the host school/site should cooperate with news media representatives in providing them access to a work area following an AIA state championship contest to aid in filing reports on the contest.
- Schools/host sites are required to allow entry to any properly credentialed media entity for a postseason contest.
- **The AIA operates under a closed locker room policy at all AIA events. At no time will media representatives be granted this access. Team boxes, team benches, team huddles and dugouts are considered extensions of locker/dressing rooms.**

State Championship Game Protocols

The AIA Staff understands the importance and excitement throughout a school community when involved in a State Championship Game. With this in mind, and the top priorities of safety and sportsmanship, below are Championship Game Protocols:

- **Pre-game Meeting** – This will be a short "safety and protocols" meeting before the scheduled first pitch. Required to attend: Head Coach, Umpire Crew Chief, and AIA Site Admin.
- All uniformed players, School Board approved Assistant Coaches, and the Head Coach will be announced pre-game, before the National Anthem.
- Special pre-game or "between innings" awards or recognitions may be given by the AIA (example Sportsmanship Award or Anniversary Teams).
- The State Runner-up Trophy and then the State Championship Trophy will be awarded immediately after the game. Only after the trophy presentation may the teams go to the designated area to celebrate and/or have their team meeting. The AIA and the venue management require that all dugouts, sidelines and locker rooms be cleaned by participating schools in an effort to show respect for next teams and the facility!
- No spectators will be allowed onto the field at any time. Spectators can meet their teams in designated areas on the concourse after the games.

SPECTATOR INSTRUCTIONS and ADMISSION PRICE – Tickets Available on GoFan

State Tournament (state championship games):
$15.00 Adults
$7.50 students with High School ID
Children five and under admitted free

State Tournament (all rounds prior to state championship):
$10.00 Adults
$5.00 students with High School ID
Children five and under admitted free

2027 AIA STATE SOFTBALL PROGRAMS

AIA State Softball Tournament programs are available free online at AIA365.com/programs.

https://www.azpreps365.com/programs/softball

2027 AIA STATE SOFTBALL SOUVENIRS

PepWear is the official supplier for AIA Programs and Souvenirs. Sale or distribution of AIA State Tournament related t-shirts or any other souvenirs by any individual or company other than the PepWear at any AIA State Tournament playoff site or game is prohibited. PepWear.com

Playoff programs, t-shirts, caps, etc. will be available at as many sites as possible.

Softball Sports Advisory Committee:

Athletic Director			Coach	
1A	Daniel Hutchens	Joseph City	Yogi Wilson	St. David
2A	Eric Tatham	Benson	Nikki Foster	Leading Edge
3A	Scott Hoffmeyer	Show Low	Shannon Woolridge	Empire
4A	Layne Peterson	Thunderbird	Open	
5A	Open		Desirea Gil	Casa Grande
6A	Tommy Eubanks	Mesa District	Melissa Hobson	Sandra Day

At Large

Donnie Tizzano	Willow Canyon
Joe Goodman	Mesa Mountain View
Armando Soto	Amphitheatre District

ADA COMPLIANCE NOTICE

ADA NOTICE:

It is the policy of the Arizona Interscholastic Association not to discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services and activities, or in its hiring and employment practices.

Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation, such as sign language interpreter, by making a request to the office staff. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.

AIA ADA COMPLIANCE OFFICER:

Questions, concerns, complaints, or requests for additional information may be forwarded to the AIA ADA Compliance officer:

Erin Coy – Assistant Executive Director
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