

## **SECTION 3 – Equipment and Uniforms**

The NAFA Rules Committee is responsible for formulating the official playing rules for the sport. The committee is not responsible for testing or approving playing equipment.

Equipment manufacturers have undertaken the responsibility for the development of playing equipment that meets the size and weight specifications. The NAFA urges manufacturers to work with various independent testing agencies and/or to take such other steps, as they deem necessary to ensure the production of safe products. Neither the NAFA nor the rules committee certifies the safety of any softball equipment. Only equipment that meets the weight and size dimensions specified in the NAFA Rules may be used in competition.

While the committee does not regulate the development of new equipment and does not set technical or scientific standards for testing equipment or the approval or disapproval of specific playing equipment, the committee reserves the right to establish size and weight criteria and maximum and/or minimum performance restrictions. In addition, the committee may from time to time provide manufacturers with informal guidelines as to the equipment performance levels it considers consistent with the integrity of the game. The committee reserves the right to intercede in order to maintain that integrity and to ensure a player's performance is more a product of their individual skill than of their equipment.

The rules committee suggests that manufacturers planning innovative changes in softball equipment submit the equipment to the rules committee for review before production.

All equipment used in competition should be of a nature commonly available through retailers to the general public. Uniforms and protective equipment must be worn properly and defective equipment must be repaired or replaced immediately.

### **Ball – SECTION 3.1.**

The yellow optic cover, red-stitch 12-inch ball, with a COR of .47, and 375 lb. Max compression, shall be used in all NAFA play. In 10 and Under, the yellow optic cover, red-stitch 11-inch ball, with a COR of .47, shall be used in all NAFA play.

### **Bats- Game – SECTION 3.2.**

The NAFA uses a bat standard, as defined by the NCAA, see Appendix A.

**PENALTY — If a batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat (one that does not meet the required specifications), upon discovery, the bat shall be**

## **SECTION 3 – Equipment and Uniforms**

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removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout), the batter shall be declared out and base runners shall not advance. If a batter enters the batter's box with an altered bat (one that has been structurally changed to enhance performance); the penalty for an illegal bat shall be imposed in addition to the batter being ejected from the game.

### **Bats-Warm-Up – SECTION 3.3.**

The warm-up bat must weigh no less than 39 ounces and have a minimum barrel diameter of 2 inches. The bat shall be of one-piece construction and shall have a safety grip 10-15 inches from the knob and securely affixed. No attachments (i.e., fans, donuts, etc.) are allowed on an official bat, except the SwingSock, or, Pow'R Wrap warm-up attachments.

**PENALTY – The presence of an illegal bat, or attachments in the on-deck circle shall result in the equipment's removal from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout) and the player shall be warned. Should the illegal bat, or attachments reappear in the on-deck circle, the coach shall be ejected.**

### **Casts/Braces/Splints/Prostheses – SECTION 3.4.**

All casts and splints must be padded. Prostheses may be worn. Braces with exposed hard surfaces must be padded. Any of these items judged by the umpire to be potentially dangerous will not be allowed.

*Note: Any decision by the umpire should be based on whether or not a device worn or used by an individual with a disability changes the fundamental nature of the game or poses a significant risk to the safety of other players.*

### **Catcher's Equipment – SECTION 3.5.**

All catchers must wear a mask with a built in or attachable throat protector, NOCSAC, approved helmet with ear flaps, shin guards which offer protection to at least the foot to knee area, and body protector. An attachable throat guard shall be commercially manufactured, unaltered, and securely attached to the mask.

**PENALTY – The umpire shall warn the violator(s). If the violator(s) does not immediately comply, they shall not be allowed to receive warm-up pitches or catch for the remainder of the game; however, they shall not be ejected.**

*Note: Player's who receives warm-up pitches off the field of play (bullpen area, dead-ball area) must wear a mask with a throat protector, if warm-*

## **SECTION 3 – Equipment and Uniforms**

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*ing up within the playing field area, a spotter must be present.*

### **Gloves/Mitts – SECTION 3.6.**

All players except the catcher must use a leather glove/mitt that meets the following maximum specifications. Palm width: 8 inches; top opening of web: 5 inches; web top to bottom: 7 ¼ inches; thumb top to bottom edge: 9 ¼ inches; highest finger top to bottom edge: 14 inches.

The catcher may wear a leather glove/mitt of any dimension.

Gloves/mitts worn by players may not be the color of the ball but may be any combination of other colors. The pitcher's glove must be uniform in color, but two tints of the same color are acceptable.

**PENALTY – If noticed before a play, the umpire shall direct the fielder to remove the glove/mitt. Should the illegal glove/mitt reappear, the offending player shall be ejected.**

**If a play is made with the illegal glove/mitt, the offensive coach has the choice of taking the result of the play or having the play nullified. If nullified, the batter returns to bat, runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the last pitch and play is resumed.**

### **Helmets – SECTION 3.7.**

a. **Offense.** While batting, running the bases or in the on-deck circle, each offensive player is required to wear a double-earflap protective helmet with face mask, and chin strap. Youth players who occupy third or first as coaches, must also comply with this requirement. **NOCSAE stamp is required.**

**PENALTY– If an umpire observes a player wearing a damages or illegal helmet before coming to bat, while at bat, or while on base, the umpire shall direct the player to change to a legal helmet without penalty. Failure to wear a legal helmet when directed by the umpire shall result in the player's ejection.**

**Deliberately wearing the helmet improperly or intentionally removing the helmet while actively running the bases shall result in the player being declared out but shall not remove a force play. The ball remains live. If no apparent play is obvious, no one shall be called out.**

b. **Defense.** A defensive player may wear a helmet. If more than one player wears a helmet, the helmets should be the same color. If a pitcher wears a helmet, it must have a non-glossy finish.

### **Jewelry – SECTION 3.8.**

Players are prohibited from wearing exposed jewelry. Religious, and medical alert medal, or bracelet may be worn but must be taped, and

## **SECTION 3 – Equipment and Uniforms**

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may be visible.

**PENALTY** — If an umpire observes a player wearing jewelry other than what is allowed, the umpire shall direct the player to remove it. Failure to remove the jewelry when directed by the umpire shall result in the player's ejection.

### **Shoes — SECTION 3.9.**

All players must wear shoes with plastic, nylon, canvas, leather or similar synthetic material uppers. The soles may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats, metal spikes are not allowed. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the sole of the shoe are allowed. Pitching toes are allowed for all players as long as the pitching toes are securely fastened.

### **Uniforms — SECTION 3.10.**

All eligible players should be attired with uniforms of the same style, color and trim. Exception: A uniform part that must be changed due to saturation of blood shall not cause the player to be penalized.

- a. Coaches should be neatly dressed in professional coaching attire. Base coaches do not have to be identically dressed.
- b. **Foul-weather wear.** Sweatshirts, sweat pants, nylon windbreakers and jackets may be worn if the weather warrants.
- c. **Headgear.** Visors, headbands and caps are optional parts of the uniform and may be mixed. All headgear and must be worn with the brim of the hat facing forward. **EXCEPTION:** The catcher may wear the brim facing backwards.

**Exception:** Plastic visors, bandannas, and handkerchiefs are not allowable headgear.

- d. **Jersey.** All uniform jerseys must have a whole number between 0 and 99 inclusive on the back. The number(s) or its outline shall be of contrasting color and shall be at least 6 inches high. Players on the same team shall not wear the same number. If duplicate numbers exist, only one player may be in the game at a time or one of the players must change her number of jersey.
- e. **Knee/shin pads.** Knee or shin pads are permitted, and colors may be mixed.
- f. **Pants/Shorts.** The uniform may consist of pants or shorts, or, a combination of both.
- g. **Undershirts/under shorts (Sliders).** It is not required that players wear undershirts or under shorts (sliders), if worn, they must be in solid colors, and worn as intended by the manufacturer (not frayed,



### **SECTION 3 – Equipment and Uniforms**

torn or slit).

**Penalty (a) thru (g) – The umpire shall issue a warning to any player not complying with the uniform rule. Any player not correcting the uniform violation shall be ejected.**

