

SOFTBALL REGULATIONS

(Updated August 2009)

DAKOTA ATHLETIC CONFERENCE SOFTBALL REGULATIONS

Section 1. Participation Requirements.

- (a) All member schools are required to participate in either women's track and field or softball.

Section 2. Conduct of Participants.

- (a) The highest standards of sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches, and others associated with the game.
- (b) It is the duty of the coach to be in control of his players at all times in order to prevent any unsportsmanlike act towards opponents, officials, or spectators.
- (c) Coaches are expected to comply wholeheartedly with the intent and spirit of the rules.
- (d) Coaches are to refrain from commenting to the media on the quality of the officiating.

Section 3. Letters of Intent and Recruitment.

- (a) All incoming student athletes receiving aid as defined by the NAIA shall be required to sign the Dakota Athletic Conference Letter of Intent. Student athletes may be released from a Letter of Intent only by the institution's Athletic Director. A copy of the signed Letter of Intent shall be forwarded to the Conference Commissioner within 14 days after signing. September 1 is the first date an athlete may be signed to a letter for the next academic year.
- (b) This policy applies to all sports and to all athletes. All coaches are required to follow this policy.
- (c) A weekly list of Conference signee's will be distributed to all member Institutions.
- (d) Schools are responsible for releasing the names of their signees to the media. Schools are not to use the names or number of signees to other institutions in any publication or release to the media.
- (e) If, during the school year or summer vacation period, the Athletic Director, or Coach of a member institution is contacted or becomes aware of contact by an athlete who is enrolled or signed a letter of intent at another institution, it shall become the responsibility of the contacted (Athletic Director) to notify in writing the institution where the athlete is enrolled or signed within 10 days following the first contact.
- (f) A coach or another representative of a member institution may respond to a contact by an athlete only after the enrolled athlete's institution (Athletic Director) has been notified.
- (g) A coach or another representative of a member institution shall not initiate contact with an athlete who has enrolled or signed a letter of Intent at another institution.
- (h) Violation of any part of the recruitment policy shall cause an immediate investigation by the National Conduct and Ethics Committee for appropriate action.

Section 4. Disciplinary Authority of the Commissioner.

- (a) The Commissioner shall have the authority to take disciplinary action, short of expulsion, against Conference members for violation of Conference or NAIA rules. Any appeal of a decision by the Commissioner shall be made to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

Section 5. Sports Committees.

- (a) There shall be a committee for each sport which the Conference sponsors. The members of the committee shall be all the head coaches in each sport. For each such committee, the members shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair and a Secretary. Each officer shall be limited to two years in one position. After two years the Chair Elect Vice Chair will move up to the Chair position and the Secretary will move up to the Vice Chair

and the Committee shall select a new Secretary. Effective fall of 2005. The Chairperson has the authority to call meetings providing two weeks notice is given. Notice of the meeting shall be given to the Athletic Director in charge of the sports portfolio and the Commissioner. Each Athletic Director will be assigned a sports portfolio and will serve as the liaison between the sports committee and the Athletic Director's Council. The Chair or his designee may appear before the Athletic Director's Council to present the views of the committee on matters related to their sport and to make recommendations for change. The Secretary is charged with the responsibility of preparing and distributing the minutes of all meetings. Copies are to be sent to all committee members, the Athletic Director in charge of that portfolio and the Commissioner.

Section 6. Schedule.

- (a) Softball - The maximum number of varsity playing dates is 28. Further, no student may compete on more than 28 playing dates (this includes varsity and junior varsity etc.) during a sports season in an academic year. The total number of junior varsity dates is limited to twelve.
- (b) Junior Varsity competition in any required or optional sport may not be scheduled prior to the date of the first varsity competition in that sport unless approval has been granted by the Commissioner.

Section 7. Post-Season Competition.

- (a) Conference teams may compete in post-season games in accordance with the DAC and NAIA playoff formats.

Section 8. Practices.

- (a) Practice is defined in the NAIA Bylaws in Article I, Section E6 as an activity organized and/or directed by an identified member of the coaching staff of that sport in which appropriate equipment is used or instruction and/or evaluation of the athlete takes place.
- (b) The starting IN-SEASON PRACTICE date for all fall sports will be the date established by the Council of Athletic Directors. The starting IN-SEASON PRACTICE date for all winter sports is October 1. The starting IN-SEASON PRACTICE date for all spring sports is February 1.
- (c) IN-SEASON PRACTICE and competition for all sports shall end on the last date of the NAIA competition for each sport.
- (d) Softball will be allowed 25 out-of-season practices days, two may be scrimmages. The term in which each sport may conduct out of season practices follows:

<u>FALL</u>	<u>SPRING</u>	<u>SPRING OR FALL</u>
Baseball	Football	Basketball
Softball	Volleyball	Wrestling
Tennis	Soccer	
Track & Field (Indoor & Outdoor)	Golf	

Section 9. Conference Champion.

- (a) The DAC Champion will be determined by regular season play. (Note: a team must play a minimum of 16 Conference games to qualify.)

Section 10. Rules.

- (a) The DAC and the NAIA abide by official NCAA softball rules.
- (b) The 8 run rule after 5 innings.
- (c) All games will be seven (7) innings.
- (d) The official DAC- softball will be the ball used for the NAIA playoffs.

Section 11. Game Procedures.

- (a) Infield practice will be eliminated, if necessary, due to late arrival, wet grounds, etc.
- (b) Game and pre-game warm-up shall start on time unless the home team and/or visiting team have given notice that the game will be delayed in starting. A revised starting time must be agreed upon by both coaches.

Section 12. Squad Limitations.

- (a) For all Conference games, visitors and home squads shall be restricted to 18 players.

Section 13. Time of games.

- (a) Weekdays - no earlier than 2 PM. Weekends - no earlier than 1 PM. Game times may be adjusted based on mutual consent.
- (b) Time schedule for games will be arranged between the two teams.

Section 14. Game Officials.

- (a) An umpire-in-chief and a field umpire shall be used in Conference games.
- (b) Umpires are obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sportsmanship and are required to enforce each section of the Official Softball Rules unless exceptions are specified in this manual.
- (c) Selection of umpires is the responsibility of the home administration.
- (d) The officials shall be paid the amount agreed to by the Athletic Director and the Officials.

Section 15. Home Team Responsibilities.

- (a) Rosters, schedules and game information sheets are to be sent to all Conference coaches prior to the start of regular season play.
- (b) Media outlets from around the state should be contacted promptly with the results of each game played.
- (c) The home team is responsible to provide water, ice, trainer, and adequate protective screens for the visiting team.
- (d) The home scorebook shall be the official book and every effort should be made for the person on the home book to consult with the person on the visiting book whenever a controversial or questionable judgment arises throughout the game.

Section 16. Awards.

- (a) Individual and team awards shall be given only when at least one-half or more of the Conference institutions participate in a sport.
- (b) The Conference coaches shall select the following individual awards at the end of the season. Each selection will receive a DAC-10 Recognitions plaques.
 - 1. Most Valuable Senior
 - 2. Player of the Year
 - 3. Coach of the Year
- (c) All-Conference team shall be selected by the Conference coaches at the end of Conference competition. The number selected is to be consistent with the number allowed by the NAIA. Each athlete selected will be awarded a DAC recognition certificate. Honorable mentions will not be recognized in any sport.
- (d) A "Player of the Week" shall be selected each week of competition. The Conference coaches are to submit

nominations for this honor at the time the weekly statistics are reported. Each athlete honored will be awarded a DAC certificate and will be recognized through a press release to the media.

- (e) The coaches are to select a "Pitcher of the Year" and a "Freshman of the Year". The individuals selected shall receive a DAC-10 certificates.
- (f) Athletes with high academic achievement are honored at the end of each term as DAC ACADEMIC HONOR SCHOLARS. Individual certificates are awarded to each athlete that qualifies. (See Appendix G in the DAC manual for the qualification policy for this award.)
- (g) Selection Policy on DAC Most Valuable Graduating Senior Award and Most Valuable Player
 - 1. The athletes should have contributed greatly to the success of his or her own team and served as a role model for other squad members.
 - 2. The Sports Chair of each sport is responsible for conducting the selection process.
 - 3. Only one athlete is to be selected for each award.
 - 4. Each school should be given the opportunity to nominate an athlete for each award. The most valuable graduating senior athlete must be in his or her final year of eligibility. The most valuable player does not have to be a senior.
 - 5. All Coaches should be given the opportunity to vote by ranking all those nominated in order of preference. The points for each athlete nominated will then be calculated by using the following method:
 - #1 rank 10 points
 - #2 rank 9 points
 - #3 rank 8 points
 - #4 rank 7 points
 - #5 rank 6 points
 - #6 rank 5 points
 - #7 rank 4 points
 - #8 rank 3 points
 - #9 rank 2 points
 - #10 rank 1 points
 Total the points from all ballots to determine the Most Valuable Graduating Senior and the Most Valuable Player.

Section 17. Conveying Information to Non-Conference Opponents.

- (a) Staff of member institutions shall not provide or exchange information in any form with representatives of non-conference opponents if such information could be used for scouting purposes or in some other way to the disadvantage of any member institution's athletic teams.

Section 18. Pregame Information.

- (a) It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director or designee of the director at the host institution to provide information to the coach of the visiting team regarding access to the facilities, dressing room accommodations, starting time, officials assigned, and any special arrangements such as pregame or half-time ceremonies or other information important to the planning of the visiting team. This information shall be made available on arrival of the visiting team.

Section 19. Trainer and Training Room Services.

- (a) Each institution shall provide its own athletic trainer services, and the training room facilities of host institutions shall be made available to visiting teams for all contests.

Section 20. Conference Publicity and Statistics.

- (a) The Conference shall maintain a Conference Sports Information Director and all releases regarding official business of the Conference shall be released at the direction of the Commissioner. For each Intra Conference

contest, host institutions shall have the responsibility to file statistical reports; for each contest with non-conference opponents, the member institution shall file the reports. All reports shall be filed immediately following each contest.

Section 21. DAC Policy on Delaying, Postponing and Rescheduling Contests.

(a) Rescheduling Policy for DAC Softball:

1. Unplayable means the weather or field conditions are such that the scheduled games cannot be played. The decision on playable or unplayable is to be made ultimately by the home Athletic Director or Designee.
2. Once a contest has started, the Umpire in Chief shall determine when a contest is to be terminated, delayed or resumed.
3. The home Athletic Director and the visiting Athletic Director is to establish a time when the final decision will be made if a field is unplayable. The time should be set so as to provide sufficient time to consider the rescheduling options. The time will vary depending on distance to travel and bus company policy.
4. Conference rescheduled games are to take preference over scheduled Non-Conference games. When scheduling Non-Conference games, this policy should be stated in the contract or agreement.
5. It is recommended that when viewing weather sites, WEATHER UNDERGROUND.com and safetravelusa.com are among them. This site has a long history of being accurate and is used by the military.

(b) Rescheduling Priorities:

1. If Saturday is unplayable, the double header is to be moved to Sunday/Monday if the field is playable on those two days.
2. If the field is unplayable on Saturday & Sunday at the home site and the scheduled traveling team's field is playable, the games are to be switched to that site (travel payment policy to be worked out by the two Athletic Directors).
3. If team A is scheduled to play team B for the final weekend of the season and Saturday becomes Unplayable, then A & B may play on Monday. No other team could play A or B on Monday.
4. When both sites are unplayable, a neutral site may be utilized, but requires approval of both Athletic Directors (travel payment is to be worked out by the two Athletic Directors).
5. Week day double headers may be rescheduled with the approval of both Athletic Directors.
6. Any other rescheduling possibilities require the approval of both Athletic Directors.
7. In #'s 4, 5 & 6, if the athletic directors cannot agree on rescheduling, then the Commissioner shall make a determination as to the course of action.
8. Conference games shall not be moved up in the schedule more than 48 hours of the scheduled date.

Section 22. Softball Playoff Policy and Procedure.

- (a) A post season double elimination tournament shall be held with all teams participating.
- (b) The tournament bracketing is based on the order of finish of each team in Conference play. The bracketing used shall provide for the elimination of four teams the first day.
- (c) The site for the DAC will be determined by the following rotation: Dakota State, Jamestown, Dickinson, Valley City, Minot, Mayville, Black Hills, SD Tech (host schools must have satisfactory facilities). Schools sponsoring the sport for the first time will not be allowed to host.
- (d) In event of any ties in the Conference standings, the following procedure will be utilized to determine ranking:
 1. Head to head competition.
 2. Head to head -vs- Conference common opponents - from top to bottom based on winning percentage.
 3. Record vs. conference opponents starting from top team to bottom.
 4. Runs scored against.
 5. Coin flip.

- (e) Policy on determining home team in playoff games:
 - 1. The higher seed in the winner's bracket shall be the home team.
 - 2. The home team in the loser bracket games is determined by a coin flip.
 - 3. A coin flip shall be used to determine the home team in the "if necessary championship games".
- (f) The home administration is responsible for game administration costs such as umpires, balls, ticket sellers and takers, etc.
- (g) The visiting teams will not be reimbursed for travel expenses.
- (h) The home administration is responsible for selecting and paying the umpires. Two umpires will be assigned to each game.
- (i) The tournament must be played through the Championship game, unless extreme weather or safety concerns are present. This decision will be made by the host Athletic Director after consulting with umpires and coaches.
- (j) The Rule Book and the NAIA Coaches Manual for all other policies.
- (k) DAC Softball Rainout Policy:
 - 1. If the tournament is canceled before any games are played, the #1 seed in the tournament will represent the DAC.
 - 2. If the tournament is canceled any time after play has begun and there is a lone undefeated team remaining, that team will represent. If there are two or more undefeated teams remaining after play has begun, the highest seeded team will represent the DAC.
 - 3. If the tournament is canceled any time after Championship Game #1 is complete (and before the if-needed game becomes a complete game) and then the tournament is rained out, the winner of Championship Game #1 would be declared the DAC playoff champion.
 - 4. Games shall be contested on Friday and Saturday. If games cannot be played on Friday, the tournament format shall remain a seven team single elimination bracket with games played on Saturday.
 - 5. If game cannot be played on Friday or Saturday, the tournament will continue on Sunday only if extension is granted by the NAIA.
 - 6. Every attempt will be made to conduct a full, seven team double elimination tournament. Every reasonable attempt should be made to move the tournament to an alternative location (within 90 miles) in the event of inclement weather if deemed necessary by the tournament director.

Section 23. Alcohol and Tobacco Products.

The use of alcohol, tobacco or tobacco products is not permitted by participants, coaches, cheerleaders, trainers, game administrators, or officials in the playing areas during DAC or NAIA competition and practices for such competition. The coaching staff and the Athletic Director shall enforce this policy during practice sessions. The game administrator and/or the Umpire shall enforce this policy during competition. Enforcement of this policy shall follow the following steps: On the first offense, the individual(s) and team shall receive an official warning. A second offense will cause expulsion from practice or game.

Section 24. Verbal Abuse (bench Jockeying).

Game personnel shall not use language that will, in any manner, refer to or reflect negatively upon opposing players, coaches, umpires or spectators. **PENALTY**--The umpire shall warn the offending individual and the coach one time. If the verbal abuse continues after the warning, the offender shall be ejected. If the verbal abuse continues after the first ejection, the head coach shall be ejected along with any other offending personnel.