



NFS Handbook

August 2020

Auckland Softball Association Incorporated – NFS Playing Rules

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1. SECTION A: BY-LAWS

1. Overview

The NFS playing rules are played under The Northern Fastpitch Series (NFS) and shall observe the following rules specific to the Premier Men's, Premier Women's, Reserve Men's and Reserve Women's competitions. These rules are in conjunction with governing Auckland Softball Association by-laws and the Softball NZ rulebook where applicable.

2. Convenor & NFS Delegates

A Premier/Reserve Grade Convenor may be appointed with a Job Description to control, promote and regulate Premier & Reserve Grade Softball. In turn the Convenor may form a delegate's forum and relevant sub-committees to assist in the management of the competition. The Convenor will be the General Manager of Auckland Softball, if not named separately.

The Convenor and any delegates and sub-committees shall report to the ASA board, including any review or recommendations for changes to the playing rules.

The ASA will appoint a convenor for any ground hosting semi-final or final games and that person shall assume the delegated authority of NFS Convenor for those games in relation to any protests of enforcement of the above rules. All teams shall be notified of such persons.

3. Communications

All Communication to the ASA both verbal and written is required to come from the Club Secretary in the first instance. Communication for NFS related matters may be made from team management directly to the NFS Convenor.

4. NFS Delegates Meetings

The convenor will schedule, NFS Delegates Meetings at intervals that reflect the needs of the competition. Meeting notes shall be recorded, and action taken when and if required and then will be forwarded to the board and distributed to participating Clubs and Teams.

2. SECTION B: NFS - COMPETITION RULES

1. Playing Season

The official playing season shall commence as close as possible to the first Saturday in October and conclude on the last weekend of March, subject to Grounds being available. The ASA shall have the power to amend the season start and finish at its discretion.

2. Official Draw

The Official Draw will be made available to the Clubs via the ASA Website. The Home team is the first named team in the draw.

3. Competitions

The ASA shall conduct the NFS competition in line with by-laws for meeting team entry requirements and team number limitations. The Competition shall be under the control of the ASA.

- a) Grade definitions are as follows:
 - Premier Men shall consist of up to Ten (10) teams.
 - Premier Women shall consist of up to Ten (10) teams.
- b) Team entries are required to be with the ASA no later than 5.00pm on the second Friday in August.

4. Registration of Players

- a) Master Registrations
 - i. No player shall be eligible to take part in any of the ASA controlled games unless, and until, he/she has been registered with the ASA as a member of a Club affiliated with the ASA. Where the team is from a club affiliated to another association, then the same registration rule shall apply to that membership within that association.
 - ii. You may only be registered to play with one club.
 - iii. A player must be a financial member of their NFS club only, Example: A player may not represent an age grade for one club and represent another club in the NFS, unless under the Loan Player rule (By-Laws 17.8).
 - iv. Final Registration for all grades must be confirmed on Sporty within 5 days after the first played game. Late or incomplete registrations are liable for a fine of \$50.00.
- b) Registration Minimum Numbers
 - i. All Premier Teams must register a minimum of 10 players per team, which must be maintained throughout the season. Reserve Grade Teams must register a minimum of 9 players per team, which must be maintained throughout the season.
 - ii. U19 Grade Players (or U17 Grade Players where a club does not have an U19 team) can be included on Reserve Grade Registration. Such registered NFS grade players may not exceed 2.
 - iii. These age grade players must play 60% of the games in their own registered age grade to qualify for Auckland Finals.
- d) Registration Offences

- i. Clubs committing Registration offences are liable to a fine of \$50.00 per offence.
- ii. Any team, which plays an unregistered player, shall be deemed to have lost the match. If both teams are guilty of the By-law, both teams shall be debited with a loss for each offence.
- iii. Registration infringements and points deducted for such infringements shall be notified.

5. Player Dispensations

- a) Game Dispensation. The following shall be applied for higher honours (ASA, NHSA, CMSA, WSA, NFC, SNZ):
 - i. A pitcher, catcher and one other or;
 - ii. Four team members
 - iii. Representative qualification is for selection to the players' registered association teams and above.
- b) Requests for tournament dispensations shall be made at the time of team nomination and shall be submitted to ASA using the appropriate form. Dispensation is not available for non-softball related reasons e.g. Weddings.
- c) Where a game has received dispensation, it shall then be rescheduled to be played within 14 days of the original date. The team awarded dispensation shall become the visiting team for the rescheduled fixture.

3. SECTION C: BY-LAWS – PLAYING RULES

1. Match Playing Rules

- a) All Games shall be played under Softball New Zealand Rules.
- b) Play shall commence at the time appointed. Only exception to this is bad weather, or the previous game not being concluded. Failure to commence game within 5 minutes of the scheduled start time due to any other circumstance than above will result in the game being forfeited by the offending team.
- c) Teams can use Designated Player (DP) and Designated Runner (DR).
- d) If game is rained out and 5 innings has been completed, this is an official game result. Should 5 (five) innings have not been completed then a new game will be rescheduled by the ASA. Rain out games will be completed wherever possible within 7 days of the original scheduled date, with Tuesdays set down for Premier Games and Thursdays set down for Reserve Games.
- e) If you wish to intentionally walk a batter, you may ask to place him/her on base at any time before or during an at-bat.
- f) When there is 2 down and catcher is on base, you may change him/her with a runner so they can kit up. This is for a quick change over. The runner used is the batter/runner that was the second out.
- g) Coaches in the coach's box must be in club uniform or smart club colours. Closed in shoes must be worn on the diamond at all times.
- h) Batboys/girls MUST wear a 2-ear helmet at all times and must wear covered in shoes. For safety it would be preferred that they are 10 years and over.
- i) In all Premier Games play must commence with a minimum of 9 players (Reserve Grade, play may commence with a minimum of (8) eight players) or the team shall be deemed to have lost the game by default.
- j) In the event of sickness or injury, a team may continue play without the injured player being replaced, except in the Premier Grade, where 9 players must be on the field at all times.
- k) Game time. Confirmed as follows:

Premier Grade 7 innings no time All Games

Reserve Grade 1hr 25mins Round Robin and post series excluding final

- i. Tie breaker will used to gain a result if the scores are tied at the completion of regulation innings or time
- ii. Premiers and Reserve Grade final will be (7) seven innings.
- iii. Where held, Plate Semi-Finals and Finals will be as per 'i'.
- l) Play offs of any NFS Championship, shall be ranked in order by the SNZ Tied team formula.
- m) Mercy Rule will apply in all grades.
 - i. 15 runs in 3rd innings
 - ii. 10 runs in 4th innings
 - iii. 7 runs in 5th innings

2. Fixtures

- a) Cancellations will be advised on Facebook or via notification from NFS Co-ordinators.
- b) Cancellations will only occur where ground closures dictate. Ground Convenors and Umpires may otherwise at their sole discretion deem a game cannot proceed where player safety dictates.

3. Team Cards and Standings

- a) Teams must fill out a complete set of team sheets and give the official Scorer this no later than 15 minutes before game time. They must be given the WHITE copy and one other for the umpires. Please ensure you put shirt numbers, positions and full name. The top of the sheet must include game number.
- a) The Reserve Grade is required to complete the team sheet in the same manner as the Premier Grades. This is to be handed to the Official Scorer on the ensuing Premier Game being played between the same clubs. Where the game is played and an official scorer not present then it must be sent to the Statistician within 5 days of the game being played.
- b) If teams enter a player(s) on their team line up sheet that is not present at the diamond they shall lose two competition points. Players may be added to the team line up sheet during the game (when they arrive at the diamond).
- c) The ASA Scoring App is to be used to post all final scores. This will enable the points tables to be updated automatically.
- d) Team Standings. Play-offs and/or semi-finals will be determined on team points at the completion of the round robin games, based on 2 points per win. Either the top four teams, or up to but no more than 50% of the teams entered, in each grade will advance to play-offs. The play-off team numbers to be stated prior to the start of each season. Where two or more teams are tied on the same points, then the run ratio between those tied teams only will be used to determine positions.

4. Play-Offs and Finals Eligibility

- a) To qualify for NFS finals series (semis and finals) players must be registered with that club by the 31st December and have played seven (7) NFS games in either NFS grade for that club.
- a) Application for dispensation for play-off eligibility must be received by the Coordinator no later than 48 hours prior to scheduled play-off games. Dispensation will be considered for reasons of injury and similar circumstances.
- b) Premier Men. Eligibility for NFS final series shall be 7 games played in either NFS grade for that club. That is a player qualifying for a Reserve Play-off game may play in a Premier Play-off game.
- c) Premier Women. Eligibility for NFS final series shall include games played for the nominated support grade provided that such person is registered in that grade prior to 31st December and plays more than 60% of the games in that grade at the time of play-offs. Dispensation shall be granted, where requested, for players unable to fulfil the 7 game requirement due to pregnancy in the interests of player safety, subject to supporting documentation.
- d) Reserve Men. Eligibility for NFS final series shall be seven games for the NFS Reserve Team. It may also include games played for an open grade provided that such person is registered in that grade prior to 31st December and plays more than 60% of the games in that grade at the time of play-offs.

- e) Played = entered game. Umpires will monitor as best possible to ensure only players present at games are named on team line up sheets.
- f) Final series, semi-finals and play-offs are used in such a manner that means the games that follow round robins, but precede Grade Finals.
- g) Any attempt to utilise a player during the finals series who has not qualified, or otherwise been approved, the Coordinator shall order the removal of the player(s) from the game. Failure to observe this rule for the duration of a game shall result in the forfeiture of the game.

5. Umpires

- a) Umpires for competition matches shall be appointed by the Appointments Officer of the Auckland Softball Umpires Association subject to confirmation by the Executive Board.
- b) Umpires of Premier Games shall be entitled to a fee to cover expenses in carrying out their duties. The amount and games concerned to be determined at the beginning of each season. The Auckland Softball Association will administer and collect the monies from Clubs for these expenses.
- c) Where only an Official Umpire is available for a Premier Game, then the official at their sole discretion shall determine if a Base Umpire is required from the home team.
- d) Club umpires are required at each Reserve Grade game. Each team is to supply an umpire as follows:
 - i. Home team – Plate umpire
 - ii. Away team – Base umpire
- e) Where an Official Umpire is not available for a Premier Grade then the same as above shall apply until an Official is available for the game, or otherwise for the duration of the game.
- f) Failure to provide your umpire at any game during the season will see the offending team lose points and be liable for a fine from the NFS, unless both teams agree on alternative umpire coverage prior to the start of the game.

6. Scorers

- a) The Scorers Association will provide Official Scorers to all Premier games where possible. Where no Official Scorer is provided, Clubs shall provide a Scorer, such Scorer to make themselves known to the Umpire and co-operate at all times.

7. Defaults

- a) A team unable to compete in any match shall notify the ASA not later than 8.00pm (2) two days prior to the scheduled match. Failure to do so will incur a penalty of \$500.
- b) Any Premier Team not able to play in any match whether notified or un-notified will be fined \$500.00.
- c) Any Premier Team that withdraws from the competition will be liable for a fine of \$500.

8. Disciplinary Action

- a) All disciplinary matters will be dealt with in and in accordance with the ASA Disciplinary Procedures Policy (By-Laws Appendix 1).

9. Judicial & Appeals Committees

- a) Any protests that occur during a game need to be raised at the time it occurs, that is before the next pitch is thrown. The protest fee is \$100 and must be handed to the official scorer (not umpire).
- b) The Board shall appoint a Judicial Committee to deal with such matters as outlined in Rule 16 of ASA Constitution, ASA By-Laws and the ASA Disciplinary Procedures Policy. (By-Laws Appendix 1)
- c) ASA Judicial Processes and policies will apply to all games played within the NFS competition irrespective of the location that the game is played or the home association that the team is registered in.

10. Playing Equipment

- a) Two ear helmets must be worn at all times. It is advised to have a minimum of 5 helmets per team.
- b) Bats used in the NFS competition shall meet the requirements of SNZ in accordance with the published list of approved bats.
- c) All premier and reserve teams are required to have two match balls ready for use at the start of every game. Either the Mizuno 150 or Easton 819 can be used.

11. Grounds – Equipment and Buildings

- a) Nominated Contact Person
 - i. Each club shall appoint a nominated contact person for grounds related matters, including confirmation of ground conditions for playing days. Such person shall be readily accessible on and during playing days.
 - ii. A Nominated Contact Person shall be responsible for liaising with the Auckland Council for ensuring that the standard of the playing surfaces is maintained to a safe and acceptable level. This may differ from that responsible for Association contact.
- b) Minimum Ground Requirements – Premier Grade.
 - i. Diamonds shall be fully fenced diamonds including outfield. All Player dug-out areas must be behind a fenced area.
 - ii. All Bases will be of a fixed nature, with First Base being a double base.
 - iii. A Minimum of 5m will be maintained between the diamond and team dugout areas.
 - iv. Player amenities should include changing facilities and additionally separate umpire facilities wherever possible.
 - v. The host Club should have First Aid facilities available at all times. The minimum requirement is a suitable First Aid Kit.
 - vi. All Clubs shall have clearly marked diamonds as per the SNZ rulebook
 - vii. All diamonds will have the team dugout areas clearly marked, and wherever possible these will be behind fenced areas for player protection.
 - viii. Wherever possible clubs will have player and spectator amenities available and these should be open throughout playing times.
 - ix. All Clubs will have a clearly identifiable representative available during playing days.