



## PARTICIPATING SCHOOL TOURNAMENT INFORMATION 2024 MHSAA SOFTBALL

### 1. TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The MHSAA Softball tournament is conducted in four equal Divisions as established by enrollment submitted by member schools in their enrollment declaration forms in the spring of the preceding school year. Schools are assigned to one of 128 Districts, 32 districts in each of the four divisions.

District winners advance to one of 32 Regional events, 8 Regionals in each Division. Regional winners advance to one of 16 Quarterfinals, 4 Quarterfinals in each Division. Quarterfinal winners advance to the MHSAA Semifinals/Finals. District pairings are determined by a draw conducted by local tournament managers. Host locations for all levels of the tournament and initial groupings are prepared by MHSAA staff and reviewed by the MHSAA site selection committee and are posted on the MHSAA Web site.

#### Tournament Dates

District first round (only in 5 or 6 team districts) – Tuesday, May 28\*

District Semifinals & Finals – Saturday, June 1 or May 30/May 31\*\*

**\*NOTE:** District First Round games may be played on Thursday, May 23, Friday, May 24 or Saturday, May 25 only if participating teams (and host, if applicable) agree in writing to the tournament manager; otherwise, the games must be on Tuesday, May 28.

**\*\*NOTE:** District Semifinal & Finals games may be played on Thursday, May 30 OR Friday, May 31 only if all schools agree in writing to the tournament manager; otherwise, the games must be on Saturday. All District Semifinal & Final games must be played on the same day.

Regional Semifinals & Finals – Saturday, June 8

Quarterfinals – Tuesday, June 11

Semifinals – Thursday-Friday, June 13-14 @ Michigan State University

Championship games all Divisions - Saturday, June 15 @ Michigan State University

#### Thurs., June 13 – SEMIFINALS

Division 1 – 10:00 a.m.

Division 1 – 12:30 p.m.

Division 2 – 3:00 p.m.

Division 2 – 5:30 p.m.

#### Fri., June 14 - SEMIFINALS

Division 3 – 10:00 a.m.

Division 3 – 12:30 p.m.

Division 4 – 3:00 p.m.

Division 4 – 5:30 p.m.

#### Sat., June 15 - FINALS

Division 1 – 10:00 a.m.

Division 2 – 12:30 p.m.

Division 3 – 3:00 p.m.

Division 4 – 5:30 p.m.

#### Pairings for Regional and Semifinal Games

##### **Regional pairings as determined by the MHSAA:**

Lowest District # vs. Highest District #, 2<sup>nd</sup> Highest District # vs. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lowest District #

(Note, e.g., 1=low, 4=high)

##### **Semifinal pairings as determined by the MHSAA:**

**Division 1** - Quarterfinal #2 vs. Quarterfinal #4, Quarterfinal #1 vs. Quarterfinal #3

**Division 2** - Quarterfinal #5 vs. Quarterfinal #7, Quarterfinal #8 vs. Quarterfinal #6

**Division 3** - Quarterfinal #11 vs. Quarterfinal #12, Quarterfinal #9 vs. Quarterfinal #10

**Division 4** - Quarterfinal #13 vs. Quarterfinal #14, Quarterfinal #16 vs. Quarterfinal #15

## 2. TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

**Home Team Designation** - The home team designation for all levels of MHSAA Softball Tournament games will be completed by an on-site pregame coin toss administered by game officials and/or the tournament manager.

**Dugout assignments** – When host schools are participating, they will be allowed to occupy their traditional dugout. When host schools are not participating the following dugout assignments will apply for Districts, Regionals, Semifinals and Finals:

Top bracket line - 3rd base dugout; Bottom bracket line - 1st base dugout

**Game Balls** - The 2024 MHSAA tournament softball is the Wilson .47 COR, 375 compression optic yellow. The MHSAA and its official ball partners will supply softballs to each District, Regional, and Quarterfinal Manager.

**Warm-up periods** - At all MHSAA tournaments there is to be no batting practice on the infield of the game field diamond. Other diamonds may be used for batting practice if they are available to both teams. Each team is to have a maximum of ten minutes fielding practice (on the game field) prior to each game. The home team takes infield first. Teams shall remain off of the infield playing surface during their opponents' infield practice.

**Artificial noisemakers are not permitted in dugouts or on the field of play.**

## 3. OPT OUT POLICIES, ELIGIBILITY LISTS, ROSTERS

Schools must see that tournament managers receive an accurate Eligibility List and Team Roster by the Opt-Out Due Date. These forms are available at mhsaa.com. Failure to fulfill the above obligations by the specified Opt-Out Due Date will result in MHSAA penalties as stipulated in the MHSAA Handbook. For softball, the Opt-Out Due Date is Wednesday, May 8, 2024. Additions, changes or updates to the Master Eligibility list may be made prior to the first date of the MHSAA Tournament which is May 28. Schools must notify the tournament managers by the Opt-Out Due Date if they DO NOT intend to participate. Schools that withdraw after the Opt-Out date are subject to MHSAA penalty.

**Use of ineligible** - Individuals or teams which are defeated by an ineligible opponent or teams which allowed one or more ineligible students to participate do not advance in MHSAA tournaments. If placements in MHSAA tournaments are vacated as a result of an individual being ineligible or a team allowing one or more ineligible students to participate, other individuals or teams neither advance to those placements nor receive awards for those places.

## 4. DRAW PROCEDURES

The tournament manager shall coordinate the draw involving all schools in the MHSAA District. Draws may be held no earlier than April 1, 2024. All schools shall be notified in advance of the draw. Host schools may draw the bye.

**REMINDER:** Regardless of teams present, softball (and baseball) District and Regional sites will participate in an open draw, which may result in baseball and softball teams from the same school occupying different lines of the bracket. The two tournaments are considered separate for draw purposes.

## 5. TIME SCHEDULE

Games at the District and Regional level shall not begin before 9:30 a.m. It is recommended that start times for Quarterfinal games be after 3 p.m. and take into consideration participating team travel. Sites hosting multiple quarterfinal games may have earlier start times. Local managers determine time schedules for District and Regional games. There shall be at least 25 minutes between games.

## 6. AWARDS

The winning school in each division at each District and Regional Tournament will receive a trophy. The runner-up school and winning school at each Final Tournament will receive a trophy. Twenty-one medals will be awarded to winning schools at District, Regional, and Final Tournaments. In addition, the same number of medals will be awarded runner-up schools at the Final Tournament. Additional medals may be purchased by schools through the MHSAA using the extra medal form.

## 7. LIMITS OF COMPETITION

Softball teams and individuals may play a maximum of 38 games. A student shall participate in no more than two games per school day.

**8. LOCKER ROOM PRIVACY POLICY:** Using devices of any kind to capture or transmit images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms, dressing areas, training rooms, weigh-in rooms, showers, restrooms, or other areas where there is an expectation of privacy during MHSAA tournament events. Tournament managers or athletic directors that discover such use should move immediately to have the device removed and inform the head coach or athletic director of the identity and nature of the activity of the person involved.

## 9. ADMISSION

District, Regional, Quarterfinal and Final games will sell digital tickets via GoFan for all spectators except pre-school children accompanied by an adult. District tickets will be \$7, Regional and Quarterfinal tickets will be \$9. Semifinal and Final game tickets will be \$11 for all admissions (GoFan Digital tickets ONLY), good for all games for that day of the tournament. There will be no on-site sale of tickets.

**Team expenses** – Participating teams assume all costs at the District, Regional and Quarterfinal games. For Semifinal and Finals games, teams that travel more than 75 miles to the tournament site qualify for lodging, mileage, and meal reimbursement as per the approved MHSAA formula.

Tournament managers must file the Financial Report form by July 1 following their event. Host share is 10% of gross receipts or \$300, whichever is greater. If a site does not charge admission, only official's expenses will be reimbursed.

## 10. OFFICIALS, SELECTION, ASSIGNMENTS

The MHSAA will assign umpires for Regional, Quarterfinal, Semifinal and Final games. At the District level, tournament managers will hire officials. ***There is one major change from previous years for officials assignments made through Arbiter. We have transitioned to assigning officials using the main MHSAA Arbiter group (#107891) for postseason assignments. If you have not had access to this group in the past, you will see an invitation to be added in the upper righthand corner of your page in the dropdown menu once you've logged in. Please accept that invitation so that you can view and pay the officials assigned to your games.***

**District** - Two umpires will be used for each District Tournament softball game. A total of three umpires shall be hired for District games with the District manager assigning two umpires to each game using the two umpire system. Managers may enlist local assignors to assist in the hiring of officials, but the responsibility for such hiring is that of the tournament manager. It is recommended that managers make every effort to rotate district assignments to qualified officials so that a variety of officials have the opportunity to work district games.

**Regional** - Three total umpires will be assigned by the MHSAA to each Regional Tournament. The two-person umpiring system shall be used for each Regional game.

**Quarterfinal** - Three umpires, assigned by the MHSAA, will work each Quarterfinal softball game.

**Semi and Final Games** – A three umpire crew, assigned by the MHSAA, will be used for each Semifinal and Final softball game.

## 11. PLAYING RULES/ADAPTATIONS

All National Federation playing rules will be followed for all tournament games. The MHSAA weather game suspension rule shall be applied when applicable (see weather policies).

**Score differential** - The game shall end when, after three innings, a team is 15 or more runs behind or after five innings, a team is 10 or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat. The 15 and 10 run rules will be in effect for all games throughout the MHSAA tournament.

**Softball Tiebreaker** – In all MHSAA Tournament games the National federation tiebreaker will be used beginning in the 11<sup>th</sup> inning of tied games.

Protests will not be reviewed by the MHSAA. All disputes must be decided at the site before the game proceeds. The umpires will make the final decision regarding game events.

## 12. MEDIA & MERCHANDISING

For information on credentials, drones, locker room privacy policy, microphones, photographers, flash photography, postgame interviews, press box, results, streaming (audio and video), and videotaping, go to this [Media/Streaming Information PDF](#). All media credential requests at the District, Regional and Quarterfinal level are processed by local managers. Credential requests for Semifinal and Final games will be handled by the MHSAA.

Here are a few important sections, some specific to softball:

- **PHOTOGRAPHY** - Media areas may not be designated in live-ball territory. All media should check with host management prior to the contest regarding appropriate areas to stand during gameplay.
- **RESULTS/SCORE REPORTING** – Tournament results should be reported to the MHSAA immediately after games, not the next morning. Scores of bracketed tournaments should be entered in the Score Center on the MHSAA web site or emailed to [results@mhsaa.com](mailto:results@mhsaa.com). Host schools are responsible for informing local media and the major daily newspapers.
- **STREAMING – AUDIO & RADIO** – Outlets are required to submit a broadcast application for postseason events with the MHSAA. Approval or denial emails will be sent to both the outlet and host school. Outlets are encouraged to check with the host school before applying to check on space/equipment needs. There is no limit to the number of outlets that may stream audio – as long as the host can accommodate them. In the regular season, outlets do not need to submit broadcast applications but need permission from the host school to provide an audio stream.
- **STREAMING - VIDEO (REGULAR SEASON)** – Video streaming during the regular season is allowed by the home/host school in a couple of different ways. If the home/host school is a member of the NFHS Network, they must stream games to the NFHS Network first and foremost. They can also produce a stream to broadcast on a school-controlled page (separate from the NFHS stream). Additionally, NFHS Network members can partner with local media to broadcast regular season home games on the media outlet’s channel/website. Schools that are not members of the NFHS Network can stream regular season home games to a school-controlled webpage. Refer to the Multimedia Regulations for more information.
- **STREAMING - VIDEO (POSTSEASON)** - The broadcast and streaming rights of MHSAA post-season tournament events belong exclusively to the NFHS Network, Bally Sports Detroit, the MHSAA, and those media outlets which have pre-arranged to secure those rights. Teams participating in MHSAA Tournaments are prohibited from streaming live video of any portion of an event over the Internet - including using social media platforms or any other method. Likewise, individual spectators are also prohibited from live streaming video through any means. Participating schools are responsible for informing their students, parents, and other fans of this policy and to assist the MHSAA upon request in enforcing it.

**MERCHANDISING** - Concession stands, whether operated by school or non-school groups, must confine sales to non-alcoholic beverages, edible items and general school spirit items that were available at regular-season home contests. The selling of tournament-related merchandise is limited to programs offered by the MHSAA and its authorized vendors, which may be in contact with you regarding their availability. Such programs may include, but are not limited to, the following categories: T-shirts, DVDs and photography. Regardless of the availability of such authorized programs, schools may not produce their own tournament-specific merchandise items to sell at MHSAA tournament sites. Raffles and 50-50 drawings are not allowed. *Use of MHSAA Logo* – The MHSAA logo and acronym are registered trademarks. MHSAA tournament trophy designs are also copyrighted. Use of these legally protected marks requires written permission of the MHSAA. Contact the MHSAA Communications Director for additional information.

### **13. SPORTSMANSHIP**

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct in Previous Contest** - A coach who is ejected during a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct shall be prohibited by his/her school from coaching for at least the next day of competition. This is true even if the coach is a parent of a player. A coach serving the disqualification penalty shall not be on the premises. If a school fails to enforce the subsequent disqualification with respect to its coach or the coach fails to comply, the tournament manager or any registered official or representative of a member school who becomes aware of the violation shall report it to the MHSAA, which shall prohibit the school from the remainder of the current tournament. (Regulation V, Section 3(D)).

**Player** - Unless a school or the MHSAA applies additional conditions, a suspended player is treated as an ineligible player, which means that student shall not participate. It is permissible, but is not recommended, that the player may sit with the team, even in uniform. The minimum requirement is that the suspended student shall not enter the contest as a participant. If a school fails to enforce a suspension required under MHSAA regulations with respect to one of its students, tournament management or any representative of a member school who becomes aware of the violation shall report it to the MHSAA for further action, which shall include (but not be limited to) forfeiture of the contest and thus elimination from the remainder of the tournament.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct in Previous Contest** - A player who is ejected during a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct shall be prohibited by his/her school from playing for at least the next day of competition. If a school fails to enforce the subsequent disqualification with respect to one of its students, the tournament managers or any registered official or representative of a member school who becomes aware of the violation shall report it to the MHSAA, which shall prohibit the school from the remainder of the current tournament.

**Coach and Player** - Any coach who is disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct two or more times during a season, any player who is disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct three or more times during a season, and any coach or player who is ejected for spitting at, hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing or intentionally and aggressively physically contacting an official at any time during that season, is not eligible to participate in the MHSAA tournament for that sport that season. If the tournament disqualifying ejection for that individual occurs during the MHSAA tournament, that player or coach is ineligible for the remainder of that tournament.

The school of the disqualified coach or player must prohibit that person from being present on the property of the tournament venue for the remainder of the tournament series. If that school fails to enforce this, the tournament manager, any registered official or representative of a member school who becomes aware of the violation shall report it to the MHSAA, which shall prohibit the school from the remainder of the current tournament.

## 14. WEATHER POLICIES, SUSPENSIONS, POSTPONEMENTS

When teams are delayed in arriving at tournament sites because of inclement weather, management is encouraged to consider delaying competition for a few hours and/or playing games in brackets of teams that are present and prepared to participate. If, after a reasonable delay, fewer than 60% of the scheduled teams have not arrived, the tournament must be rescheduled. If 60% or more of the scheduled teams are present, the tournament is to be conducted on the day scheduled.

**Suspended game tournament rule (See II.C below)** – In the MHSAA tournament, if a game is called (ended by the umpire) prior to completion of any full inning, after the fifth inning, the game shall become a suspended game if the visiting team has scored one or more runs to tie the score or take the lead and the home team has not retaking the lead. When the game is resumed on another day, the game will be completed pursuant to all rules. This rule is in effect for all competition throughout the tournament. If the home team has the lead after 5 full innings and the visiting team does not tie the score or go ahead and the game is called due to weather it is a completed regulation game, not a suspended game.

**Postponed games** - If inclement weather causes a suspended or postponed game on Friday or Saturday, the remaining games shall be played in the order they are scheduled. However, the times of the games may be altered. If the tournament is cancelled on Saturday, games will continue the next playable day. See Thunder & Lightning Policy in the MHSAA Handbook for information when a game start should be delayed, or when a game should be stopped, due to thunder and/or lightning.

### I. Regulation Game

A. A regulation game where a winner cannot be determined, shall be counted as  $\frac{1}{2}$  game won and  $\frac{1}{2}$  game lost for each team. (MHSAA allowed – requires league adoption)

B. A regulation game consists of seven innings, unless:

1. It is extended because the score is tied; or
2. It is shortened because the home team does not need all, or only a portion, of its half of the seventh inning (or extra inning); or
3. It is shortened because the score differential rules take effect; or
4. It is shortened because the umpire calls the game; or
5. It is predetermined that each game of a double-header will only consist of five or six innings (does not apply to MHSAA Tournament contests). If utilized, any rules pertaining to the seventh inning will apply to the fifth or sixth inning, as the case may be.

C. If a game is called, it has become a regulation game if:

1. Five full innings have been completed; or
2. Four and a half innings have been completed, if the home team is ahead; or
3. The home team scores one or more runs to tie the game in their half of the fifth inning.

### II. Suspended Games

A. A game shall become suspended if it is called any time prior to becoming a regulation game unless, by mutual agreement of the opposing schools, it is declared a “no game”.

B. A regulation game that is called when the score is tied shall be suspended unless, by mutual agreement of the opposing schools, any remaining play is shortened or the game is terminated.

1. If a game which has reached regulation reverts back to score of the previous completed inning and would make the score tied, it shall be suspended from point the game was called.

C. For MHSAA Tournament games only, a game shall become suspended if it is called after becoming regulation and when the visiting team has scored one or more runs to take the lead in their half of the inning in which the game is called, and the home team has not scored enough runs to retake the lead in their half of the same inning.

D. A suspended game shall be resumed from the exact point of suspension:

1. On a make-up date to be determined, if mutually agreed upon by both coaches; otherwise
2. Immediately preceding the next single game between the two teams; or
3. Immediately preceding the next double-header between the two teams, if no single game remains.

**NOTE:** Suspended MHSAA Tournament games will be resumed at the earliest date and time, to be determined by the tournament host manager and the MHSAA.

E. The completion of a suspended game is a continuation of the original game. The lineup and batting order of both teams shall be exactly the same as the lineup and batting order at the moment of suspension, subject to the rules governing substitution. The score, number of outs, visits to the pitcher, any ejections that occurred and any runners on base or batter up to bat (or due up to bat) from the moment of suspension of the original game shall be in effect. A game resumed from the exact point of suspension shall not count as an additional game on the schedule.

F. If a suspended game which has not yet reached regulation cannot be completed on a later date, it shall become a “no game”.

G. If a suspended game that has reached regulation is tied and cannot be completed on a later date, it shall be decided under I.A. above.

H. Games played in the Semifinal and Final level of the MHSAA postseason tournament shall be suspended at any point in which a game must be called prior to its completion.

**15. MEDICAL EMERGENCY POLICY** - Host school Tournament Managers should follow all local school district policies regarding medical emergencies for participating athletes, coaches, students and adult spectators for competition conducted in school facilities. It is advised that AED devices be readily available during tournament competition. In addition:

- Trainers are an allowed expense and encouraged but not required.
- All MHSAA concussion protocols will be followed (see attached form).
- MHSAA tornado watches and warnings shall be followed.

**When MHSAA tournament contests are conducted at non-school facilities, plans should be developed for the following needs and/or circumstances:**

- Student, coach and spectator shelter for outdoor events
- Host facility emergency equipment such as AED's, fire escape, etc.
- Emergency communications, i.e. phone numbers, school administration contact
- Coordination with facility management regarding evacuation, first aid, on-site responsibilities
- Medical transport or first responder contact procedures
- Proximity/directions of nearest medical facility

#### **16. INJUNCTION, RESTRAINING ORDER, PROTESTS**

If an injunction or restraining order is served or presented at an MHSAA tournament site and such purports to require the eligibility of or participation by a student or team which a school and/or the MHSAA has ruled to be ineligible under MHSAA regulations, the on-site tournament manager is to suspend the entire competition (team competition) or events in which that student is intending to participate (individual competition). If the meet has begun, it shall be completed. There are no protests in MHSAA Tournament games. All disputes must be decided at the site before the game proceeds. The umpires will make the final decision regarding game events. The Tournament Manager will resolve all next game concerns.

#### **17. TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

Use of alcohol or tobacco, including e-cigarettes or other smoking devices, is prohibited at MHSAA tournament events by players, coaches and spectators. Managers should stress in coaches meetings that they are not to use tobacco at the tournament venue.

**Tobacco:** It is not intended that a violation of the tobacco policy should lead to immediate ejection of a coach. He or she should be reminded of the policy and reported to his or her school administration after the contest. Only if the coach is unwilling to comply promptly shall he or she be disqualified from coaching at the event. Officials should be reminded of the tobacco policy and reported in writing by the tournament manager to the MHSAA.

**Alcohol:** Historically, officials promptly disqualified coaches, and tournament managers immediately replaced officials who were under the influence of alcohol; and no change in such procedures is intended by these policies.

#### **18. SPECTATOR POLICIES**

The following general policies apply to all spectators at MHSAA Tournament events. Tournament managers may also have additional school, facility or institutional restrictions and/or policies.

**Sportsmanship/Taunting** - Spectators shall not engage in any inappropriate cheers that are offensive, nor direct any taunting toward players, coaches and/or other fans.

**Banners** – Tournament managers may allow banners with appropriate language in support of teams.

**Noisemakers** – Whistles, cow-bells and air-horns are not allowed. Other noisemakers may be allowed by tournament manager discretion as long as they are not intended to distract players or officials or cause problems with other spectators. Managers are the sole judge for allowing such use.

**Smoking** - Use of tobacco is not allowed in the facility by spectators at MHSAA Tournament events.

**Service Animals** - The policies of the local host site shall prevail with respect to pets/animals. In the absence of local host policy, animals or pets shall not be permitted to enter MHSAA tournament venues; including spectator and team areas. However, properly marked or documented service animals which are leashed or harnessed at all times may accompany spectators paying admission or attending with other approved team or school personnel. Individuals who bring service animals are asked to bring their own waste disposal bags and request special seating in advance of the event if this is needed.

**19. YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY:** During MHSAA Tournament events, the MHSAA expects all designated managers, volunteer or paid staff assisting in the event, officials or any other personnel to follow local school district policy and state statute regarding the mandatory reporting of child abuse, bullying, hazing and sexual harassment. A report of such activity shall be made to legal authorities and to the MHSAA Executive Director or his designee.

**20. [RETURN TO ACTIVITY & POST-CONCUSSION CONSENT FORM](#)**

**21. [EXTRA MEDAL ORDER FORM](#)**