



## **WESTERN COLLEGIATE SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION**

### **LEAGUE RULES & GUIDELINES -**

**The Western Collegiate Softball Association operates under the Alberta Intercollegiate Fastball Association.**

**The Alberta Intercollegiate Woman's Fastball Association (AIWFA) is the full legal name of the organization which operates under the Western Canadian Softball Association (WCSA) banner.**

**Alberta Intercollegiate Woman's Fastball Association (AIWFA) follows the current Softball Canada Rules, except where noted otherwise in the Softball Alberta Operating Rules and in the AIWFA Operating Rules.**

#### **A. Facilities**

1. Park arrangements: The host team is responsible for booking diamonds and making arrangements for umpires. Host and visiting teams are responsible for communicating on park locations, game times and teams involved.
2. Facilities must be properly maintained at least every second game and have fences, covered dugouts and proper distances marked out. Diamonds fenced at ladies' distance is a goal for all games, especially for play-offs and championships. Other requirements include a concession, washrooms, and good playing field conditions.
3. Visiting team is responsible for its travel expenses (transportation, accommodations, and meals)
4. Championship tournament facility costs will be afforded by the League, which in turn has the opportunity to charge admission and run a concession to recover costs. Umpire costs will also be covered by the Association.

#### **B. Eligibility**

1. The Eligibility Rules adopted by WCSA in 2018 are outlined in Appendix A.
2. The final date for adding players to the roster is September 13, of the current season. A copy of the final roster must be received by the League Secretary on

or before September 13, of the current season. WCSA Team Roster Form is the only acceptable submission of registration to the League. It must be signed by the Head Coach in response to the statement guaranteeing the eligibility of each player as per the Eligibility Rules outlined in Appendix A. All players must sign the roster. Teams must have a full roster of players registered at their institution to be eligible to attend Canadian Championships.

3. A maximum of 20 players is allowed on a team. Where there is an injury situation the head coach must apply to the League Executive to add another player to the roster. A maximum of 17 players may appear on the line-up for an individual game.
4. A player has to play in four league games to be eligible to dress for playoff games.
5. To be eligible for League Playoffs, the team must submit a **verified** WCSA Team Roster form to the league executive prior to the start of League playoffs. A **verified** team roster has to be signed off by a member of the Athletic Department (Athletic Director) or Admissions Office (Registrar) to confirm that each player is enrolled at that institution and is considered a full-time student at that institution. [Recognizing the difficulty that some programs have had accessing a verified roster in a timely fashion, as an alternative, teams can submit a final roster with “proof of enrollment” forms attached for each player listed on the roster.]
6. Requests for eligibility rulings and appeals will be directed to the League Committee who will make a judgement in consultation with a committee of at least three.
7. The League President and Committee will consult the USports Operating Rules for advice or back-up on rulings if necessary.
8. A “Manifest Hardship” may exist with a team. That is, they may not have sufficient players in number and position to achieve the eligibility requirement that 100% of the roster be registered at the institution represented by the team. The decision to add players to a team’s roster from other non-fastball colleges only or high school Grade 12 students must be submitted to the League President in writing. Players may not be added from a college/university which has a team in the league. This decision to notify must be made before said players participate in try-outs or play for the team, and only after a commitment has been made to players attending the institution. A preliminary roster must be submitted before the first league game even though it may not be complete. All special situations can be appealed for consideration.

All players must be attending a post-secondary institution or in their last year of high school (Grade 12) to be eligible candidates in deciding to add them to your roster. Players from other institutions or Grade 12 shall be identified as “affiliates”. They will not be eligible for League Playoffs or National Championships. The use of ineligible and/or affiliate players in League or Playoff games will result in the forfeiture of all games that those players participated in. Further disciplinary action may be taken at the discretion of the League executive.

### **C. Umpires**

1. The two-umpire system will be used and when possible the three-umpire system will be used.
2. If there is only one umpire available, before a given game can be played the participating teams must agree to play the game.
3. Umpires must be Softball Canada carded.

4. Where umpire travel costs are required it will be afforded out of the League Treasury, using a portion of umpire fees paid by teams.
5. Umpires are not insured to umpire forfeited games. Therefore, they umpire at own risk and teams' risk.

#### **D. Affiliation and Insurance**

All players, teams and the league must be affiliated with their provincial softball association, for the purposes of insurance and liability protection. This must occur prior to any team practises.

#### **E. Uniforms**

1. All parts must be matching for the members of the team and numbered (6" min. height).

#### **F. Equipment**

1. The "Double Base" must be used.
2. The official softball used for League and Championship play will be the Softball Canada official ball.
3. The "home" team supplies 1 new and 2 good used balls (at the umpires' discretion) for all league games
4. All equipment must conform to Softball Canada standards.

#### **G. Games**

1. The aim is to achieve completion of 7 innings, within 2 hours of playing time. Hence, no new innings to begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes has expired. If time allows, a tie will be broken using the international tiebreaker rule commencing in the 8th inning. This applies in playoffs and Championship games as well.
2. The pitching distance is 43 feet.
3. All other rules shall conform to the current Softball Canada Rulebook.
4. Batters must keep one foot in the batter's box between pitches during a turn at bat.
5. A Default occurs when a team does not show up for a game or cancel 48 hours in advance of the game. The result is a \$100 fine levied against the team in question and payable through league fees for next year. Teams are allowed 2 defaults, after which, they will be deemed ineligible for participation in League and National Championships
6. Cancelled game(s): Host coach in collaboration with the League President will determine if games are playable for a given day (weekend) concerning weather conditions, etc. and communicate to all concerned as soon as possible. Teams must be prepared to attend the games even if the games may be cancelled after they arrive. If notified that games will proceed, a team that does not "show up," even if they notify the host, will be in a situation of forfeiture for the game(s) concerned. Once teams take the field on game day, cancellation is determined by the umpire.
7. Rainout games are scheduled by arrangement between the teams involved. If the game(s) cannot be made up, then the final score is 0-0 and the standings are not affected.

8. A Forfeited game occurs:
  - a. as per Softball Canada rules or,
  - b. where a league game postponed in advance by one team is not played before the league schedule is completed. In this case the opposing team must have been prepared to play the game and will be awarded a win in the standings by a 7-0 score.
  - c. Where a team forfeits a game due to insufficient eligible players (teams must attempt to play the game(s) with the aid of ineligible players).
  - d. A team which forfeits any league game may be denied participation in League Championships especially where there is a tie for last playoff position. In the case of being tied for a position between teams in any playoff position the team(s) with a forfeit would lose that position.
9. A game cannot count for more than two points in the standings. One game cannot count for two or more games in the point standings to make up cancelled games.
10. Run Ahead Rule: The Softball Canada run ahead rule will be in effect. This is in effect for both league and playoff games.

#### **H. Scorekeeping and Statistics**

1. 4-part line-up cards will be used.
2. All teams must ensure there is an official scorekeeper for each game in league play. Official qualified scorekeepers are those people who have been trained prior to the first league games. They may use scorebooks but are encouraged to use electronic devices (tablets, etc.). It is expected that each team, and especially the hosting team ensure there are qualified Official Scorekeepers for all games and when hosting other teams.
3. Each team is expected to supply a qualified Official Scorekeeper (trained) for each of their Home Games. This person would generally travel with the team. In the event a team cannot provide an Official Scorekeeper they may borrow one from another team.
4. Winning teams are responsible to email game scores to the League Statistician within 24 hours of games played (or after the weekend).

#### **I. Determination of Standings**

Wins and Losses shall be recorded. But a percentage will be calculated based on the number of games played to determine positions in the standings.

#### **J. League Schedule**

1. League (Conference) play generally commences on the Labour Day weekend and continues as outlined in the schedule set for the season until the Championship weekend. As well, weekday games may be scheduled as necessary. League Championships to be played on the weekend prior to the Canadian Thanksgiving weekend.
2. If the Championship weekend is cancelled for any reason, the weekend following the Canadian Thanksgiving weekend will be reserved by all teams as an alternate date for the Championship weekend.
3. The League will operate as one division

- a. It is planned that each team will compete in 15-20 league games. League Championship games are in addition.
- b. On each weekend there will generally be games at no more than two different centres. In some cases, teams will compete over two days, and in other cases on one day of a weekend. The maximum games scheduled on one day should be 3, and 6 for the weekend.
4. Barring exceptional circumstances, the allocation of playing centers for each weekend of the upcoming season will be completed no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> in order to provide teams with a clear understanding of travel requirements and to allow all arrangements to be made as efficiently as possible.
5. A draft schedule for each weekend will be available no later than May 1<sup>st</sup>. Any concerns with respect to the draft schedule should be raised with the League no later than May 15<sup>th</sup>.
6. Home teams are determined in scheduling with an attempt to achieve a balanced schedule.
7. Exhibition games do not count for league standings.

#### **K. Playoffs and League Championships**

1. Determination of Championship location and any bids to host occur at the Annual Association and League meeting.
2. Seeding for Championship play will be based on league play standing. All teams will qualify.
3. Home team in all games will be the higher seeded team based on league standings. Bench location is not affected.
4. If there is a tie between any teams in the standings the following guidelines will be used to break the tie for placement:
  - (a) Head to head;
  - (b) Runs for/against (plus/minus, maximum +/- 7 game);
  - (c) least runs scored against;
  - (d) most runs scored for;
  - (e) Coin toss
5. The Championship tournament format will be determined based on the requirements of the League.
6. Awards will be presented to the League Champions, 2nd place and 3rd place.

#### **L. League and Canadian Championship Tournament Hosting**

A bid approach may be used – Institutions (teams) desiring to host either event are requested to put together a bid package and submit at the League Annual Meeting.

Bid Package Guidelines:

1. Detail a full description of facilities:
  - a. Diamonds condition, women's distance, covered dugouts and fencing
  - b. Change rooms and shower facilities
  - c. Public washrooms
  - d. Concession
  - e. Location in relation to institution

2. Contact person for the event – name, address, telephone, email.
3. List and description of available accommodations.
4. Rainout and inclement weather contingencies.
5. Planned publicity for the event.
6. Describe any special features of the venue and special activities planned in conjunction with the event (i.e. Awards Banquet – optional).
7. Ensure that the Tournament is sanctioned by their Provincial Softball Association.

#### **M. Awards**

1. Guidelines for the selection of player award winners are included in Appendix B.
2. Player Awards:
  - a. All-stars - each playing position, plus a utility player (equalling a total of 10 players)
  - b. Hitter of the Year
  - c. Pitcher of the Year
  - d. Rookie of the Year
  - e. Most Outstanding Player
3. Coaching Staff of the Year
4. Leadership Awards - each team will individually name their leadership award winner.
5. All-Academic Team - all student athletes who are on the Honor Role for the academic year at their institution will qualify for the All-Academic Team.
6. Awards may be added or omitted as the Executive sees fit.

#### **N. League Fees and Umpire Fees**

1. League Fees and Umpire Fees are combined as one fee per team payable by August 1. League fees are \$ 1,000.00 per team payable by August 1.
2. New teams are required to post a \$500.00 bond. The bond for each team is non-refundable and an indication that the team is committed to the league and is due on August 1. Upon payment of team registration fees, the team becomes a member of the Alberta Intercollegiate Woman's Fastball Association. All payments and fees must be made payable to The Alberta Intercollegiate Woman's Fastball Association.
  - a. Teams will not be allowed to play league games before League Fees are paid.
  - b. Teams are also required to pay, prior to August 1, their affiliation fees to their Provincial Association. This is to ensure that proper insurance coverage is in place for each player and team. Teams are to be aware that their Provincial Association may require further paperwork, rosters etc. Travel permits may also be necessary. Teams are responsible for making sure they have the correct insurance coverage when travelling out of country and all teams are required to have a travel permit from their Provincial bodies for any travel out of their province.

#### **O. Hosting Responsibilities**

The Host Team(s) refers to the team(s) and its location for hosting other teams coming from out-of-town or across town. Host Team responsibilities include:

Required – diamonds, arrange Game Changer, scorekeepers, umpires, balls.  
Every game needs to be covered for scorekeeping/Game Changer. Home team is responsible for scorekeeping and Game Changer. Preferably no players, try to keep the people consistent so the stats stay consistent.  
Host Team is also responsible for communication with teams, umpires, and the League Scheduler regarding any changes to game time or location.

**P. AIWFA and League Meetings**

Barring exceptional circumstances, the Association and League Annual Meeting will generally be held in November.

**Q. Coaches and Athletes**

1. Must be in good standing with their Provincial Association and Softball Canada.
2. Players and coaches cannot be involved with AIWFA while on suspension from a provincial association and, therefore Softball Canada and any of its affiliate organizations.
3. Institutions expect club teams to follow a code of conduct. Though not all institutions require a signed agreement on Team Code of Conduct it is strongly encouraged that all teams endorse the attached Code of Conduct. It has been developed in consultation with the ACAC Operating Rules.

## **Appendix A – Eligibility Rules**

### **Student-Athlete Eligibility Rules**

#### **General Eligibility**

An athlete is responsible for making an honest, full, and continuing disclosure to her institution of all matters that affect eligibility.

A student must be registered in and attending a minimum of three (3) courses totalling nine (9) credits (or equivalent as determined by the institution's Registrar), in each semester in which they participate in WCSA competition.

Western Collegiate Softball Association (WCSA) allows you to compete for 5 years in the WCSA.

A student athlete who represents her institution in an intercollegiate fastpitch competition for any period of time is considered to have used 1 year of eligibility. This does not include exhibition games.

Participation in softball in a recognized intercollegiate league (e.g. NAIA, NCAA, NCAA, NJCAA, OCAA, OIWFA, etc.) that leads to a national championship will be considered as use of a year of the athlete's five (5) years of eligibility.

#### **Academic Eligibility**

Apprenticeship Students shall be eligible to compete following the completion of their program in the semester in which they were registered as a full-time student.

Co-op, Placement, Practicum Students: A student- athlete must be registered in and attending a minimum nine (9) credit hours (or equivalent as determined by the institution's Registrar) in each semester in which they participate in WCSA competition, unless there are circumstances within their academic program which would warrant an exception to this ruling and in which the institution continues to declare this individual a full-time student in that term (such as co-op, placement, practicum students).

A student-athlete registered in a co-op, placement, practicum program and on a recognized work term that (i) is a recognized component of their academic program and/or (ii) is recognized for institutional credit, will be eligible to participate for that institution in that term and provided the institution continues to declare the individual as a full-time student in that term.

Academic Upgrading Programs: The WCSA recognizes that some students may not be fully prepared to enter a post- secondary program and member institutions offer academic upgrading programs to assist in this transition. A student-athlete enrolled in 9 or more credits in an academic upgrading program, in a single semester, is considered eligible. A student-athlete may be enrolled in two consecutive semesters of 9 or more credits in an academic upgrading program in the same academic year. A student-athlete

who is partially enrolled in an academic upgrading program in a single semester must be enrolled in a minimum of 6 or more credits of post-secondary level courses to be considered eligible. A student-athlete is permitted to compete for only one academic year within their five years of eligibility while enrolled in an academic upgrading program.

Collaborative Academic Programs of Study: Student-athletes enrolled full-time (minimum of 9 credits per semester) in a WCSA- recognized collaborative program of a member institution are eligible to participate.

It is understood that the student-athlete's registration is considered full-time as determined by that member institution with which he/she is playing though the student-athlete may be actually registered in any particular term at the collaborative partner institution.

Registration of a Collaborative Program of Study: Student-athletes may participate in the WCSA while in a collaborative program providing they meet the WCSA requirements. For WCSA participation purposes the membership has determined that a collaborative program of study must meet all of the following criteria:

The WCSA member institution must publish the program of study in its academic calendar as collaborative with an individual partner institution. At least 50% of the collaborative program must be delivered on the WCSA member institution's campus. A copy of an agreement outlining the collaborative nature of the program between the two partner institutions is available if requested by the WCSA board of directors

Non-Academic Courses: Generally speaking, courses of general interest, community-based courses, hobby-type extension courses and non-career courses, as examples of non-credit courses, shall not be recognized for eligibility purposes. Continuing Education courses where credits are assigned and applied towards a degree or diploma are recognized as acceptable courses in a student's academic program.

### Graduate Student

An exception to course load/course credit is available to an athlete registered as a full-time student in any graduate program offered by a member institution. This accommodation is also available to a student-athlete who enrolls in any of the following designated programs:

- Bachelor of Law(s)
- Doctor of Dental Medicine
- Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)
- Doctor of Medicine (MD)
- Doctor of Optometry
- Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)
- Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
- Juris Doctor (JD)
- Additional programs may be considered upon request

## **Use of Year(s) of Eligibility**

- Western Collegiate Softball Associations (WCSA) allows you to compete for 5 years in the WCSA.
- Athletes who have completed their eligibility to participate in another post-secondary jurisdiction, such as the NAIA, are ineligible for WCSA competition.
- Athletes who have been charged with a year of eligibility or a season of competition in four separate academic years within a non-Canadian post-secondary jurisdiction, such as the NCAA, are ineligible for WCSA competition.

### **Exceptions:**

An athlete who has completed their eligibility to participate in any recognized sport of WCSA within another post-secondary jurisdiction, in accordance with that jurisdiction's rules, is ineligible for WCSA competition, with the following exceptions:

- a) NJCAA (or equivalent) student-athletes
- b) NCAA and NAIA student-athletes who have been assessed a season of competition (or equivalent) in three or less academic years but are no longer eligible for NCAA or NAIA competition because of the jurisdiction's respective time-clock / terms of attendance regulations subsequent to their attendance at their NCAA or NAIA institution.

## **Season Ending Injury**

A student-athlete who suffers a season-ending injury limiting their participation to no more than 30 percent (30%) of her conference league schedule, as documented by letter from the attending physician and by letter from the Athletic director(s) of the institution(s) concerned may be considered for reinstatement for that particular year of eligibility.

## **Amateur Status**

Any professional athlete may participate in WCSA competition one year from the date the athlete last participated in a professional game or event. One year of eligibility shall be charged to a professional athlete for each year that athlete participated as a professional in the sport of fastpitch softball.

## **Appendix B – Awards**

### **B. WCSA Awards Selection Guidelines**

1. Coaches will make their All-Star Team selection for every position plus a utility (equalling a total of 10 players).
2. Each coach will make their selection from players from teams other than their own.
3. In the event that a coach does not get their All-Star selections in to the “committee” or awards selection facilitator by the communicated deadline all nominees for awards from their own team from other coaches will be void.
4. The player with the most votes for their specific position will become the First Team All-Star for said position, the player with the second most votes will be the Second Team All-Star.
5. In the event of a unanimous vote for 1 player for First Team All-Star for a certain position, the awards committee or facilitator will use their best judgement based on statistics, and games played against which opponent to choose a Second Team All-Star.
6. Coaches will submit their pick for Rookie of the Year and the player with the most votes (unless said player’s coach did not get their picks in on time) will be named Rookie of the Year.
7. The same process stated in guideline 6 will be done for Pitcher of the Year, Most Outstanding Player, and Coaching Staff of the Year.
8. For Hitter of the Year the selection committee will consider statistics including batting average, OBP, RBI, hits and games played versus which opponents and select a winner.
9. In the event of a tie in any of these categories the awards committee or awards facilitator will review statistics while keeping in mind games played and against which opponents. All ties will be broken and 1 player will be named for each award.
10. If a coach is the head awards facilitator they will submit their nominations/votes first to remain transparent in the selection process.
11. Each team will individually name their leadership award winner.

## **Appendix C – Alberta Only**

### **C. Reimbursements – Casino Account (applicable only to Alberta schools)**

1. When funds are available the AIWFA will reimburse teams for the following expenses: Diamond costs for league games, umpire costs for the same games.
2. Subject to the availability of funds, Alberta schools are eligible for the following on an annual basis. \$1,000 reimbursement towards softball equipment. Receipts must be supplied, no payments will be issued without original receipts
3. Subject to the availability of funds, Alberta schools are eligible for the following on an annual basis. \$1,500 reimbursement towards in province travel expenses (Hotel, vehicle rental, gas).
4. Subject to the availability of funds, the executive will consider, on a yearly basis, reimbursement of up to \$4,000 towards the travel expenses of Alberta teams travelling to Nationals.
5. Upon submission of the Travel Itinerary to Alberta Gaming, AIWFA will, and subject to the availability of funds, reimburse up to \$1,500 for out of province travel other than Canadians. (Hotel, vehicle rental, gas)