



COMMENTS ON THE 2012 RULES CHANGES

WHITE REMOVED AS PERMISSIBLE SOFTBALL COLOR (1-3-1): The color “white” was removed from the list of permissible colors for softballs. All softballs used for competition must now be optic yellow. The “white” language was out of date and white softballs were not being used in the field. The change will assist schools in ordering and manufacturers in producing, the actual product being used in the field.

NINETY-DEGREE ANGLE BAT KNOB REQUIREMENT REMOVED (1-5-2a): The requirement that the bat knob protrude at a 90-degree angle from the handle was removed. There are bats on the market that meet the ASA Bat Performance Standard but do not meet the 90-degree provision due to the handle being shaped like an ax. The rules committee is primarily concerned with the performance portion of the bat – the barrel – especially when other portions of the bat do not pose any undue risk to participants.

HEADWEAR REQUIREMENTS REVISED (3-2-5): Headwear requirements were revised and clarified. Headwear (caps, visors, headbands, ribbons, etc.) may be mixed, but if worn, they must be white, black, beige or school colors (the colors are not required to be the same for team members). The logo may be any color. Flat items, no longer than 2 inches, used to control the hair, such as bobby pins, barrettes and hair clips are permitted. Plastic visors, bandannas and hair-beads are prohibited. Permitting more colors and options for players regarding headwear is consistent with other NFHS sports. A less restrictive rule may improve enforcement and school spirit. The exception formerly found in 3-2-12 has been moved into the new text of 3-2-5.

PENALTY INCREASED FOR USE OF ALTERED OR NON-APPROVED BAT (7-4-2 PENALTY): A more severe penalty was added when a batter has used an altered or non-approved bat. In addition to an out being called on the batter, the batter and head coach will be ejected from the contest. Coaches and players must be held accountable for using this type of illegal bat. Coaches must be responsible for the equipment being used in each game, even when it is not issued by the school, but a player’s personal equipment. Player safety and the integrity of the game must be maintained and this type of illegal equipment has no place in the game.