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Jo Auch  
 Assistant Executive Director

## 2022-2023 Softball Advisory Minutes

### September 14, 2022 @ 10:30 a.m. via Zoom

“AA” Coach:	Cassidy Schaar, Aberdeen Central	2025 (1)
“A” Coach:	TC Weinandt, Dakota Valley	2025 (1)
“B” Coach:	Amber Sayler, Freeman	2025 (1)
Athletic Director:	Bill Freking, Brandon Valley	2025 (1)
Principal:	Pete Wilson, Sturgis	2025 (1)
Official:	Brett Distel, Box Elder	2025 (1)
Native Am. Rep:	TBD	2025 (1)

The Softball Advisory Committee met on Sept. 14, 2022 via zoom to plan for the upcoming Spring Softball season. All committee members were present.

Auch welcomed the committee members and explained the committee members’ duties and responsibilities as well as the meeting procedures.

Cassidy Schaar, volunteered to take notes for the meeting.

The committee reviewed the softball handbook in great detail, which is posted on the SDHSAA website. Auch reported that at the present time there are 16 AA schools, 19 A schools and 15 B schools that are planning to participate in Softball in the spring season, with some still considering participation for the 22-23 season. We are still taking registration for umpires for softball. At the present time we have 65 umpires signed up. Each contest will need to hire licensed umpires for the contests (2 umpires for each contest).

Teams will be responsible for scheduling their contests and hiring umpires for each contest.

The committee then discussed the specific State Association adoption rules that we needed to put into place for the upcoming season. Things the committee discussed were:

1. End of Regulation game – A regulation game consists of seven innings unless extra innings are necessary because of tie score or shortened due to a run rule or because of weather, darkness, etc. as a result of rule 4-2-2. If double headers are played, those contests may be shorted to two 5 inning games, two-seven inning contests; a seven inning and a five inning game, but whatever the double header format is, this must be decided prior to the contest starting.
2. **Run Rule STATE ADOPTION: Adopt a 10-run rule after 5 innings and a 15-run rule after 3 innings. This would be in effect for all regular and postseason contests.** Motion was made by Distel, seconded by Weinandt Motion passed unanimously.
3. **Suspended Game Rule STATE ADOPTION:** What procedures will SD put in place for game ending procedures if we have a suspended contest? The committee felt it was important to have something in place to create consistency as to how games would end if there was a weather related issue and the game

had be suspended and we only have one inning to play, we did not want to have teams travel back to have to finish the contest, so the committee will use suspended game language in the rules book. Auch had checked with several states and borrowed language in which others were using on a suspended contest. First the definition of a **suspended game is any game that ends before it becomes a regulation game, or a regulation game that has a tie score when it is ended. If weather, darkness or similar issues interfere with play and the game is called with fewer than 5 completed innings (ended by the umpire before it is a regulation game), the game will be suspended and continued from the point of suspension at a later time. The line-up and batting order of each team shall be exactly the same as the line-up and batting order at the point of suspension.**

**Rule 4-2-2: If the game ends because of weather conditions, or darkness interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire, it is a regulation game provided:**

- a. **Five full innings have been played; or the home team at bat has scored an equal or greater number of runs in four or four and a fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns at bat; or**
- b. **Play has gone beyond five full innings and is called when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bat. The score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; unless the home team, in their half of the incomplete inning, score a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, in which case, the final score shall be recorded when the game is called.**

Letter C is added SD language that other states had implemented in order to not have teams have to travel back to complete a game if a tie occurs. Seed points would reflect a tie contest if this were to happen.

- c. **If after 5 innings, the game is suspended due to weather, darkness or similar issues that interfere with play and the game is tied, the game will end in a tie and seed points will reflect the tie based on the seed point chart at the end of this section.**

Discussion on whether teams should be allowed to come back and finish a contest if suspended after 5 innings instead of calling the game after 5 innings. The committee felt it was important to provide consistency about end of game procedure for suspended games so there is no gamesmanship in finishing the game to get more seed points etc.

Motion by Saylor, second by Schaar. Motion passed 5-1 with Freking dissenting.

4. **International Tie Breaker Rule STATE ADOPTION-** The committee discussed what type of system we would use to speed up the process for if a tie were to occur in regulation play. The committee liked the idea of the international tie breaker, but was concerned if there should be a cap on how many extra innings were played. Motion by Weinandt, second by Distel to cap the number of extra innings to three. Motion failed 2-4, with Aye votes being Weinandt and Schaar Nay votes were Wilson, Freking, Saylor and Distel.

**Adopt the international tie breaker as follows.**

**In the event that the there is a tie at the end of the regulation contest, the following tie-breaking procedure shall be followed:**

- a. **The team will play another inning starting with a runner on second base in scoring position.**
- b. **At the start of the inning in which the tie-breaker rule is used, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed on second base (e.g., if the number 5 batter is the leadoff batter, the number 4 batter in the batting order will be place on second base).**
- c. **The umpire and scorekeeper will determine that the proper runner has been placed on second base the inning begins.**
- d. **Play continues until a winner is determined based on the completed inning(s).**

Motion by Wilson, second by Freking. Motion passed 4-2 with Schaar and Weinandt dissenting.

5. **Double First Base STATE ADOPTION:** This was discussed for safety purposes. Motion by Distel, second by Weinandt to **mandate that all softball contests must be played with a double first base.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

6. **Post season playoffs:** The committee discussed how teams would qualify for the state tournament. Everyone agreed with the number of teams we have, the SoDak 16 format works well. The top 16 teams in each class will play in the postseason, with 1 vs. 16, 2 vs. 15, 3 vs. 14 etc. The high seed will host the contest.

The discussion then continued as to why we give a plaque for the winner of the SoDak contest when they will receive a plaque in the State Tournament as places are awarded 1-8 at state. The committee did not see a need to have a SoDak plaque issued at the postseason. Auch would take that to the SDHSAA Staff and Board for approval. When we have regions defined in softball, then we may bring back the plaque for post season.

7. State Tournament Planning- Auch then discussed the schedule for the state tournament which will be held in Aberdeen at the Players Complex and Northern State University. Auch asked the committee to review the game schedule and locations and asked the coaches if the contests should be played on the same fields for a specific class or rotated, as NSU's field is a turf field and the fields at Players Complex are skin fields? A lengthy discussion continued as to whether or not a team would play 2 contests on skin and then come over to NSU's turf field for the championship. Another question was will your team only play one contest per day? Most teams are used to playing multiple contests when it comes tournament time. The committee is going to look at the schedule and see how they might be able to adjust the schedule to answer the questions discussed to come up with a plan.
8. Other items to be discussed- Auch mentioned that there would be an Umpires Clinic/Training that she would work with officials on the East and West side of the state to develop to ensure all are ready for the spring.

**The committee is asking for State Association Adoptions for the sport of softball:**

- 1) **Run Rule STATE ADOPTION:** Adopt a 10-run rule after 5 innings and a 15-run rule after 3 innings. This would be in effect for all regular and postseason contests.  
Rationale: Pace of play for contests and much like the mercy rule that we have in other sports.
- 2) **Suspended Game Rule STATE ADOPTION:** A suspended game is any game that ends before it becomes a regulation game, or a regulation game that has a tie score when it is ended. If weather, darkness or similar issues interfere with play and the game is called with fewer than 5 completed innings (ended by the umpire before it is a regulation game), the game will be suspended and continued from the point of suspension at a later time. The line-up and batting order of each team shall be exactly the same as the line-up and batting order at the point of suspension.

**Rule 4-2-2: If the game ends because of weather conditions, or darkness interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire, it is a regulation game provided:**

- a. Five full innings have been played; or the home team at bat has scored an equal or greater number of runs in four or four and a fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns at bat; or
- b. Play has gone beyond five full innings and is called when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bat. The score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; unless the home team, in their half of the incomplete inning, score a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, in which case, the final score shall be recorded when the game is called.
- c. If after 5 innings, the game is suspended due to weather, darkness or similar issues that interfere with play and the game is tied, the game will end in a tie and seed points will reflect the tie based on the seed point chart at the end of this section.

Rationale: The rule book already allows for situations as to how to handle weather, darkness, etc. if 5 innings are completed or the home team is ahead in the 4 ½ innings of play. With the distances that teams may travel, the committee felt it best to have a consistent means as to how we would end contests if we had a "suspended game" noted by the umpires. We did not want to have to have teams travel great distances to finish one or two innings, noting that umpires may be an issue and travel. We also wanted consistency as to how this would end,

so we did not have the possibility for manipulation of seed points. The NFHS rule book allows for this to happen and the committee felt it was cleaner this way for all.

3) **International Tie Breaker Rule STATE ADOPTION-**

**Adopt the international tie breaker as follows.**

**In the event that there is a tie at the end of the regulation contest, the following tie-breaking procedure shall be followed:**

- a. **The team will play another inning starting with a runner on second base in scoring position.**
- b. **At the start of the inning in which the tie-breaker rule is used, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed on second base (e.g., if the number 5 batter is the leadoff batter, the number 4 batter in the batting order will be placed on second base).**
- c. **The umpire and scorekeeper will determine that the proper runner has been placed on second base the inning begins.**
- d. **Play continues until a winner is determined based on the completed inning(s).**

Rationale: This will help speed pace of play when we have a tie after a regulation contest and is a common practice in softball. This would be used in regular and post season play.

4) **Double First Base STATE ADOPTION: Mandate that all softball contests must be played with a double first base.**

Rationale: This is for safety of athletes and to avoid potential collisions at first base. Each has a base in which they are entitled to on the play.

9. Adjournment- Motion by Freking, second by Sayler to adjourn the meeting at 12:37 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.