



SPORT GUIDELINES for SOFTBALL

ARTICLE I: Season of Competition Information

NAIA 24 Week Rule with KCAC Modifications:

- Per NAIA guidelines, Softball shall have a maximum 24-week practice and competition season as established by each member institution. For the KCAC, frequency of play, practice and scheduling policies shall be restricted to the following period of time: beginning on Monday of the week in which August 15 falls and ceasing no later than May 15 per NAIA guidelines.
 1. Frequency of play, practice, and scheduling outside of this period (beginning the Monday of the week in which August 15 falls until May 15 each year) is governed by each member institution and will not be regulated by the NAIA.
 2. Member institutions may be engaged in conditioning activities beginning on August 1 in preparation for the fall season of competition. However, no practice or outside competition is allowed between August 1 and the start of the practice and competition season, which begins on Monday of the week in which August 15 falls.
 3. There shall be no more than three break periods during the 24 weeks. NAIA approved postseason participation shall not be counted as part of the 24-week period. A week is defined as Sunday (12:01 a.m.) through Saturday (11:59 p.m.). Any practice or competition during this period shall constitute one of the 24 weeks permitted.

Specific Rules on Contact:

- Athletic-related contact, which includes practice, conditioning, and/or competition activities, will be limited to 20 hours per week once classes have begun for the fall semester at the specific KCAC institution.
 - Prior to classes beginning for the fall semester, specific to each KCAC institution, the 20 hour contact rule will not apply.

- Each contest, which includes games, exhibitions, and scrimmages, will be counted as 2 hours within the 20 hours of contact during the week.
- For all KCAC teams, there will be one day per week with no athletic-related activities, which includes practice, conditioning, or competition.

ARTICLE II: Sport-Specific Rules for KCAC Softball

NAIA Coaching Manuals:

- **WEBLINK:** [NAIA Softball Coaches' Manual](#)

Sport-Specific Rules for the KCAC:

- The official edition of the NCAA Softball Rules from the NAIA Softball coaches' handbook shall be applied to KCAC conference games.
- Conference games should try to schedule to limit the out-of-class time for the players involved. Games will have to start in the early afternoon when a host team does not have access to lights. Otherwise with lights, games should be started later in the afternoon (4:00-5:00 p.m.).

Conference Scheduling

- Each conference team shall play opposing conference members with one doubleheader during each sport season to be counted toward KCAC standings.
 - Home site will rotate from one year to the next.
 - Home team will be home for both games.
 - Home team is responsible for supplying game balls for contests.
- Weekday games played before "daylight savings time" are to be played at 4:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. Games played after "daylight savings time" are to be played at 5:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. Sites without lights are to use 1:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m. start before "daylight savings time" and 2:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m. after. Weekend play times are at the mutual consent of both coaches.
- Conference games are to be played within the week designated by conference rotation schedule. Changes may be made only in the case of conference games falling in an institution's Spring Break week. Any other changes must be approved by KCAC Governing Council.
 - In the event of rescheduled dates, KCAC games must be rescheduled at the earliest possible convenience of both schools. KCAC rescheduled dates take precedence over non-conference games and tournaments.
 - These rescheduled games must be completed by midnight on the Saturday prior to the week of the KCAC Championship Tournament.

- All games are to be played with 8 run rule after 5 innings.
- International Tie Breaker is to be used in top of 8th inning in conference play.
- The official ball for the KCAC will be the Worth NAIA FP – .47 core.

ARTICLE III: Championship Event Information

Automatic Qualifier to NAIA National Tournament:

- Procedure to Determine Qualifiers for the NAIA National Tournament:
 - The winner of the conference tournament will be the KCAC automatic qualifier to the NAIA Softball National Championship Tournament.

Post Season Tournament:

Participation

- All nine conference teams can qualify for the KCAC Championship Tournament.
- In order to be eligible for the KCAC Championship Tournament:
 - A conference team must have completed a minimum of 12 conference games.
 - All conference regular season games and/or makeup conference games must be concluded by midnight on the Saturday prior to the week of the KCAC Championship Tournament.

Seeding

- Seeding shall be based on outcome of regular season conference schedule.
 - The team with the most conference regular season wins will be crowned regular season champions and qualify as #1 seed for the conference tournament.
 - The remainder of the tournament field will be seeded according to the regular season standings.
 - All tie-breaker procedures are outlined in the softball sport guidelines.

Format and Tournament Dates

- The KCAC Softball Championship will be a double-elimination tournament – See Appendix A.
 - The KCAC Championship Tournament will be held on a Thursday and Friday with Saturday used as a rainout day.
- The first round games will be played as follows:
 - #8 vs. #9 Play in game
 - Starts at 10:00 a.m. the day of the tournament

- #1 vs. Winner of #8 or #9 (Play-In Game)
- #2 vs. #7
- #3 vs. #6
- #4 vs. #5
- *Note: The remainder of the Bracket and Time Schedule is found in Appendix A.*

Tie-Break Procedures:

1. Head-to-Head Competition
2. Runs allowed in head-to-head competition.
3. Record against highest seeded teams. (Example: If two teams are tied for third place then each team's record against #1 will be compared. If tie still exists then record against #2 will be compared and continued until winner established.)
4. Runs allowed in all conference games.
5. Coin Flip

Other Tournament Procedures:

1. Home Team in the winner's bracket will be the highest seeded team.
2. Home Team in the loser's bracket will be determined by a coin flip.
3. In the Championship Game the winner's bracket team will be the home team.
4. In the Championship "If Necessary" Game, the loser's bracket representative will be the home team.
5. No International Tie Breaker will be used in conference tournament.

Weather Contingency Plans:

- Contingency Plan #1: If the conference tournament is rained out on Thursday and Friday with no games completed, but the tournament can be played on Saturday; then it will become a single elimination tournament.
- Contingency Plan #2: If more than half of the double elimination tournament games have been completed by the end of the day on Friday, but the tournament champion has not been crowned, then the remainder of the double-elimination tournament will be completed on Saturday.
- Contingency Plan #3: If the conference tournament is rained out and not able to be completed by the end of the day on Saturday, the conference regular season champion will get the automatic bid to the national championship tournament.

- *Note: The tournament committee will make the determination as to which contingency plan to follow based on the status of the tournament.*

Tournament Director and Tournament Committee

- The head coach of the host institution will serve as Tournament Director. The Tournament Director will be responsible for the scheduling of facilities and promotion of tournament.
- The Tournament Director will serve on the Tournament Committee along the following individuals:
 - Softball Sport Supervisor from the Governing Council
 - Softball Sport Chair
 - *Note: If the Tournament Committee cannot come to a final decision, the KCAC Commissioner will have the authority to resolve any dispute.*

Host Institution:

- The host site shall be established through conference rotation. The rotation will return to the top of the list after completion of the full rotation.

Tabor College – 2010
 Friends University – 2011
 Sterling College – 2012
 McPherson College – 2013
 Bethany College – 2014
 University of Saint Mary – 2015
 Southwestern College – 2016
 Kansas Wesleyan University – 2017
 Ottawa University – 2018

Tournament Entry Fee:

- Each KCAC institution sponsoring Softball as a varsity sport will be assessed a sport fee of \$400 in their annual dues and sport fees invoice to help defray the operating cost of the KCAC Softball Championship Tournament.
 - *One of the intents of this sport fee is to have the conference office cover the operational costs of the championship finals for Softball.*

ARTICLE IV: Awards

Team Awards:

- Plaques will be awarded to the Regular Season Champion Team , the Conference Tournament Champion Team, and the Conference Tournament Runner-Up Team

Selection of All Conference Teams and Other Individual Awards:

- KCAC Softball coaches will select a first and second team All-KCAC Softball consisting of (1) first baseman, (1) second baseman, (1) third baseman, (1) shortstop, (1) utility infielder, (2) catchers, (1) designated hitter, (4) outfielders, (4) pitchers, and (1) relief pitcher. An honorable mention team can also be chosen.
- The voting will take place at the conference meeting. Each school is to have a Softball representative at the conference meeting.
- The KCAC Softball Chair will select a date, location, and time for the conference meeting.
- Completed, comprehensive statistics must be made available at the meeting for players to be eligible for 1st team honors.
- The coaches will also vote on the "Conference Player of the Year," "Conference Pitcher of the Year," and "Coach of the Year". The submitted "Coach of the Year" will be the coach eligible for advancement.

ARTICLE V: Duties of the Sport Chair

- The duties of the KCAC Softball Chair are as follows:
 - Help determine the proper policies and procedures at the conference level.
 - Serve under the direction of the KCAC Commissioner:
 - Assist the KCAC Commissioner when requested
 - Represent the KCAC coaches to the KCAC Commissioner
 - Keep the KCAC Commissioner informed and updated of proposals and concerns
 - Send a copy of the KCAC Softball Guidelines to each conference coach prior to the start of the season.
 - Chair the meetings of the KCAC Softball coaches.
 - Serve on the Games Committee at the KCAC Softball Championships.
 - Inform the KCAC Softball Championship Tournament Director of all procedures and guidelines.

ARTICLE VI: Miscellaneous

Pre-Game Protocol:

- Host institutions should closely follow the recommended procedures as agreed upon by the KCAC Softball Coaches and Athletic Directors.

NAIA Conference Raters:

- One coach will be selected by vote of the conference coaches to be a member of the NAIA rating committee for Softball. The conference rater will be

confirmed each summer at the KCAC Sport Management Conference and reported to the conference commissioner and the NAIA.