

#### CIF PLAYOFF GUIDELINES

**PLAYOFF DATES:**

**16 Team Bracket**

May 2 Tuesday Wild Card (Home Unit to umpire)

May 4 Thursday 1st Round (Home Unit to umpire)

May 9 Tuesday Quarter-finals (Home Unit to umpire)

May 11 Thursday Semi-finals (Will travel out of area)

May 19 & 20 Friday TBD

Saturday TBD

**32 Team Bracket**

May 2 Tuesday Wild Card (Home Unit to umpire)

May 4 Thursday 1st Round (Home Unit to umpire)

May 9 Saturday 2nd Round (Home Unit to umpire)

May 11 Tuesday Quarter-finals (Home Unit to umpire)

May 13 Thursday Semi-finals (Will travel out of area)

May 19 & 20 Friday TBD

Saturday TBD

The official uniform for a CIF play-off game prescribed by the Southern Section is:

1. **HAT:** Clean navy blue felt or mesh hat with no logo or previous CIF Finals hats are acceptable.

a. Crew wears the same style hat.

I. Either all with **No Logo** or all with **CIF Finals** hat.

b. Those officials accepted to the 2023 finals will be provided hats.

2. **Shirt:** Powder blue pullover shirt, short or long sleeve, as set forth by CSOA-SS, with the softball patch on the **left** sleeve.

a. Those officials accepted to the 2023 finals will be provided a shirt.

b. If an undershirt is worn, it shall be white.

c. If a long sleeve undershirt is worn, it shall be powder blue.

3. **SLACKS:** Heather grey or navy blue slacks with belt loops and a black belt (no gaudy buckles).

a. No faded heather grey shall be worn.

I. **No** other shade of grey pants.

b. Pleadedpants are acceptable.

c. All members of the crew are to wear the same color slacks.

4. **SOCKS AND SHOES:** Black or dark navy blue socks and black shoes (shined/clean and no white or racing stripes).

5. **ACCESSORIES:** The plate umpire may wear one or two heather grey or navy blue ball bag(s), the face mask may have either black or tan pads.

a. All umpires shall have a brush and indicator.

b. All other equipment is optional, but highly recommended for safety purposes and to be comfortable behind the plate.

c. Nothing visible should be in the shirt pocket.

d. If a jacket and/or sweater is worn, it shall be navy blue or navy blue with the powder blue piping.

e. The only logo is the CSOA-SS Softball Official patch.

**I. CSOA-SS will provide a jacket that is to be worn at the finals**.

6. **JEWELRY:** Even though the players are allowed to wear jewelry, we need to keep the wearing of jewelry by the umpires to a minimum.

a. No watches, pagers, cell phones, etc. are to be worn on the field.

7. You are to arrival at the game site **no less than 45 minutes** prior to game time. This gives you time for your pre-game and discuss either the 2-person or 3-person system you are using that game.

a. **If you are unable to arrive at the game site 45 minutes early, do not accept the assignment.**

8. Be neat, in uniform and dignified in manner.

9. Announce all decisions promptly in a clear, distinct voice and use proper hand signals.

a. Be alert, fair, prompt and accurate in all decisions.

b. Work to be ahead of the play.

c. If an error is made, correct it promptly.

10. Display confidence, work with the teams and keep the game under control.

11. Avoid arguments, personal comments about the game or players and anything else that might interfere with judgment.

12. Keep apart from players and coaches, as well as spectators. **DO NOT** socialize. **DO NOT** offer an opinion of a decision, by a fellow umpire regardless of whether it is based on the rules or judgment. **DO NOT** become a clinician.

13. Use signals to assist each other in calling plays if either umpire is blocked out of the play. (catcher obstruction, batted ball hitting the batter, runner interference, etc.)

14. Call illegal pitches immediately in a loud enough voice to be heard but not loud enough to stop play and give the delayed dead ball signal.

**CIF Tournament Rules**

1. All playoff games will be conducted under the 2023 National Federation Softball Rules, except where Blue Book rulings or the CIF bulletin supersedes. All playoff games after round 2 will be a minimum of seven (7) innings duration.

* Run-ahead rule will only be for the wild card, 1st round and 2nd round games.
* Games shall end after 4½ or 5 innings if one team is behind by 10 runs.
* Run-ahead rule is not in place for the quarter, semi or finals games.
* Book rule 4-2-3may be implemented for quarter and/or semi games.
* Must be at least 4 ½ innings and agreed to by both coaches.

2. Teams **WILL NOT** be permitted to take batting practice on the day of the scheduled contest.

A potential batting practice violation is not a violation under NFHS rules that can be protested. If the situation occurs the coach must bring the issue to the attention of the home plate umpire at the **pre-game meeting** and ask that it be recorded. The umpire will then forward that information in a report to our office after the game is over. The game is not played under protest.

**3. Fields with baseball pitching mounds may NOT be used for any CIF softball playoff contest.**

4. Game ball: The home team provides the game balls per NFHS Rules. The official game ball for the playoffs is: **Rawlings FPCIF-SS.**

* If the home school does not have the mandated ball, check with the visitors.
* If neither team has the Rawlings ball, you may use another NFHS Certified ball.
  + - * You will need to fill out a Playoff Ball Violation form that night.
      * <https://www.cifsshome.org/playoff_ball_violation/create>
* **IF** neither team has a NFHS Certified game ball(s), you are **NOT** to play the game and notify CIF.

5. Game time is 3:15 p.m. on the designated date.

* A school may play at different times or on different days if it is mutually agreeable to both competing schools.
* CIF will be notified of the request.

8. Umpires: The umpires shall receive **$84.00**.

* Mileage will be paid to the plate umpire.
* Three officials will automatically be assigned beginning with the quarterfinal round.

9. Cheering Sections: Fan/Student cheering sections are encouraged to cheer and support their own team and should display proper sportsmanship with respect to the opposing team and the game officials. They are expected to follow the following guidelines and failure to do so may lead to removal from the contest and/or forfeiture of the contest.

* Noisemakers (the use of artificial noisemakers, ball buckets, air horns, horns, cow bells, bells, victory bells, sirens, chimes, wooden blocks, thunder sticks, etc. and electronic amplifiers) by student-athletes and team personal is prohibited while on site for competition. For this rule, the field, bullpens and dugouts are considered “on site”. Megaphones may only be used by the school’s uniformed cheer squads.
* Cheering devices such as rally towels, pom-poms and pennants are acceptable when used within the bounds of good sportsmanship.
* It is the expectation that cheering section behavior will be monitored by the assigned school staff of the school that they represent. All improper behavior/language should be addressed and corrected immediately by school staff supervisors.
* No standing or jumping on the team benches in the dugout. Please do not drag bats against the fencing in the dugout. In addition, any artificial noise that the umpire deems interferers with the game is prohibited.

10. Music may be played by the host/home team prior to the contest and in between innings. No music may be played while the ball is “live” and/or in play.

11. **Protests (rule interpretation). There will be no protests entertained by CIF following the conclusion of the game. That means that if a coach believes there is a misinterpretation of the rule(s), they are to direct their questions/concerns to the game officials per NFHS guidelines. If that happens, listen to the coach and if necessary, go to the rulebook for clarification. Be approachable.**

**CIF Southern Section – 562-493-9500 and** [**mikem@cifss.org**](mailto:mikem@cifss.org)

**3-man Umpire System**

#### Pre-Game

Prior to entering the field, crews should hold a pre-game meeting to cover the ground rules, positioning, coverage for unusual plays, rule questions, handling of disagreements between players and/or coaches and end of game procedure. The plate umpire should check the location of the score keeper(s), coordinate time and check to make sure everyone has brushes, indicators and other necessary equipment. If you wish to have water during the game, please bring your own drinking bottle or container.

**The following are points to be considered at the pre-game with your partners. There might be additional points to cover by the crew.**

* Plate meeting, PU to lead the conference. Set-up a comment from each of your partners to build validity for them. (i.e., sportsmanship, jewelry inspection by the captains, proper wearing of the uniform, etc.)
* Half-swing help, go to the umpire with the best angle.
* Go over umpire-to-umpire communications and be sure that each umpire looks at his/her partners.
* Positions between innings. The field umpires are to meet **behind 2nd base** where the dirt meets the grass. Allows for discussion and keeps you out of the way of the players.
* Fair/foul signal of the ball bounding over the bag. Plate umpire to make the call.
* Inside umpire or 3U cleans the pitcher’s plate as needed.
* Glance to see if the umpire is going out or moving to their next position. PU has ultimate observation.
* Fly ball coverage. We go out on ALL fly balls.
* Fly ball coverage. Discuss coverage by the 1U, 3U and PU.
* Fly ball coverage. If you go out, stay out but turn and watch the play develop and be aware that you might be in the best position for a play, especially at 2nd base. Communication is important if you have to come back in.
* 1U helps with the pitcher warming up.
* PU is not to release until one of the base umpires are in position.
* Appeal play. The proper umpire should be ready to make the call. If the wrong umpire is asked, point to the correct umpire.
* 1U should be ready to cover home plate.
* Double call; don’t let it happen. If it does happen, all umpires need to get together and decide. PU to state the result.
* Observe all positions before calling “time” and after each out.
* TALK…TALK…HUSTLE… TALK…TALK…HUSTLE

#### Pre-Game Conference with the Coaches

**The conference with the coaches and captains should take 3-5 minutes.**

**Here are some points to consider:**

* The PU is behind the plate and both base umpires are on the infield at the top of the batter’s box facing the PU.
* The PU introduces himself/herself and his/her partners.
* Review the lineup cards and then allow the coaches to review the lineup one more time before they become official.
* After accepting the lineup cards, ask if there are any changes.
* Have the home team coach review the ground rules.
* The home team should have the ground rules written on a card for the umpires and opposing coach..
* Ask the coach if their players are legally uniformed (need a verbal answer).
* Ask the coach if their equipment is legal (need a verbal answer).
* Ask your partners for their input. (already set up at your pre-game)
* Wish both teams good luck.
* After the conference, the PU should establish the position of the official scorer.

#### Game Control and Management

To be a successful umpire, you will have to be proficient in appearance, rule knowledge, mechanics, and game control. Your ability to control the game and to handle the situations as they arise is the one subject that is most difficult to teach. There are guidelines an umpire should or should not follow, but what works for one umpire may or may not work for another.

There are no rules etched in stone that will make your umpiring problem-free, for that matter, will work in every game situation. Below are guidelines that have proven to help many umpires control their games while developing character and stature as a respected umpire. Respect must be earned and this can only come from hard work and dedication

**DO:**

* Hold your position until the play is complete or when the pitcher has the ball in the circle, and then hustle to your position. An umpire keeps and eye on the players at all times.
* Write down all conferences. Announce the defensive conference total to the coach after each conference.
* Sweep the base/plate/pitcher’s plate only if it is needed.
* Work as a crew. Tell your partners what you are doing, NOT what they should be doing.
* Be aware and pre-plan for the next play.
* Adjust to the play, as it might change.
* Hustle.
* Use strong distinct signals.
* Be alert and be professional.
* Be ready to play before the players are.
* Know and do your job, not your partner’s or the coaches.
* Be in the proper position in between innings.
* Signal foul/dead balls from the bases.
* Walk on and off the field together.
* Hear everything but react to little.
* Call illegal pitches immediately in a loud enough voice to be heard but not loud enough to stop play and give the delayed dead ball signal.

**DON’T:**

* Call time out unless you need it.
* Allow team personnel to swarm around your partner(s). One coach and one umpire.
* Get into a shouting match on the field. Be professional in your reply when the coach comes to talk to you.
* Don’t ask a player what she called you. If you didn’t hear it, then ignore it.
* Stay on top of a close play after you have made the call.
* PUT YOUR HANDS OR ARMS AROUND A PLAYER OR A COACH. Don’t let them do this to you.
* Use unnecessary signals.
* Look to see if you are in the vision of the outfielders. If you are move a couple of steps.
* Stopping the runners on a foul ball, just signal so they can see you.
* Don’t go for “help” to pacify a coach. If you need help, ask before you make the call. If a conference is needed, all partners get together and make the decision. The original umpire will state the decision.
* Allow the questioning of balls and strikes.
* Socialize. Keep apart from players and coaches, as well as spectators.