



## **MIDDLE SCHOOL 6-8**

### **2026 Softball**

## **Sport Handbook**

### **Section 1: RULES**

#### **A. GENERAL**

All contests under the jurisdiction of the RIIL Middle School 6-8 shall be played according to the National Federation of State High School Association Softball Rules, except for any special rulings adopted by the Principals Committee on Athletics.

1. Prior to any competition, all Eligibility Lists must be received by the RIIL Office, and all Assumption of Risks forms must be on file with the school.
2. Definition of a Game/Scrimmage: Article 7, Section 2
3. Sportsmanship Expectations for Coaches, Student-Athletes, and Spectators: Article 12, Section 3
4. Loyalty to Home School: Article 7, Section 5
5. Penalties for Ejections: Article 6, Section 7
6. Protest Procedure: Article 5

#### **B. SPORT SPECIFIC**

1. Start of Season:

With the approval of the school's administration, teams may allow two (2) catchers and up to four (4) pitchers to report one week prior to the start of the spring season. (March 16, 2026)

- a) Pre-season conditioning is for 5 days only.
- b) Grades 6 – 8 may participate.
- c) Recommend a pre-season conditioning program developed and coordinated by a certified athletic trainer or other medical doctor
- d) All student-athletes must be eligible by the RIIL Middle School 6-8 Rules.

2. Home Book (Official Book)

3. Coaches in Uniform

It is recommended that all coaches, when on the field, must be in a team uniform or jersey that are the same color as the teams.

4. The home team will be responsible for the condition of the field. The bases, base line, foul lines, home plate, and pitcher's mound will all be prepared according to the rules.
5. All coaches are required to submit a RIIL approved softball game report.
6. Rule 4-2-2. Any game (regular season or playoff) shall end:
  - a) when the Visiting team is behind by 15 after two and half (2 ½) innings/three (3) innings if Home Team is behind.
  - b) when the Visiting team is behind by 12 after three and half (3 ½) innings/ four (4) innings if Home is behind.
  - c) when the Visiting team is behind by 10 after four and a half (4 ½) innings/five innings if Home Team is behind.
  - d) **GAMES ARE A MAXIMUM OF 2 HOURS. AN INNING WILL BE ALLOWED TO BE COMPLETED, BUT ANOTHER INNING CANNOT START AFTER THAT TIME.** Time will commence when Umpire says Play Ball. If a player is injured the Umpire will stop the clock.
7. Protest(s) are permitted under Article 5 rules of the RIIL. Note: ~~(NFHS Rule 10-2-3 i)~~

## **Section 2: MANDATORY COACHES CERTIFICATION & CONTINUING EDUCATION**

- A. ALL Coaches must be appointed by their School Administration. A coach is any adult with access to student-athletes through an education-based athletic program.
  - a. Including, but not limited to: Volunteer Coaches, Assistant Coaches, and Head Coaches.
- B. Coaching Requirements: Article 13

## **Section 3. SCHEDULE/GAMES**

The RIIL shall make up the schedules and order of games.

- A. Regular RIIL Middle School 6-8 softball games shall be seven innings.
- B. The home school is responsible for providing adequate crowd control measures. There is a need for increasing vigilance in this matter. Schools must make every effort to ensure that players, officials, and spectators are protected. Schools should take the following measures to secure a safe environment by:
  1. utilizing bleachers for fans to sit and watch the game(s) where space permits.
  2. providing an easily identifiable school supervisor **who is preferably an administrator or athletic director.** The school supervisor shall not be a student, nor a coach involved in the game. The supervisor will introduce him/herself to the visiting coach and the umpires thirty (30) minutes prior to the game, and will assist in the supervision of the game both on and off the field before, during, and after the game.
  3. holding mandatory meetings before the first game of the season for all coaches, athletes and their parents/guardians to review the RIIL Middle School 6-8's policy on sportsmanship and fan behavior during RIIL Middle School 6-8 sanctioned events.

A. Important Dates:

1. Coaches Interpretation Meeting-TBA
2. Preseason:
  - A. Pitchers and catchers: Monday, March 16, 2026
  - B. First Day of Practice: Monday, March 23, 2026
  - C. First Day to schedule a Scrimmage: Saturday, March 28, 2026
3. Regular Season:
  1. Week #1: begins on Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>
  2. Week #2: begins on Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>
  3. Week #3: begins on Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>
  4. Week #4: begins on Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>
  5. Week #5: begins on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>
  6. Week #6: begins on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>
  7. Last Day of the Regular Season: Tuesday, May 19, 2026
4. Postseason:
  1. Preliminary Games: May 20 or 21, 2026
  2. Quarterfinals: May 22 or 26, 2026
  3. Semifinals: May 28 or 29, 2026
  4. Championships: Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, Rhode Island College

B. Game Cap: 12 Regular Season Games prior to the start of the playoffs

C. Home teams shall set a date/time for all contests.

1. If there is a conflict in the date/time of the contest with the visiting team(s) and mutual agreement cannot be reached, the Principals of each school should resolve the conflict.
2. Once the Home Confirmation Schedule is submitted, changes will not be allowed unless there are extenuating circumstances.

D. Postponement of Regular Season Games after the confirmation deadline:

1. League Games must be rescheduled for the next day unless mutually agreed upon by both schools and within all other guidelines contained in this handbook. League games must take precedent over non-league games or lesser events
  - a. Additional Officials Fees for Games Changed within Two Weeks of original date/time

E. Practice Limitations:

- a. Scrimmages allowed after 5 days of practice
- b. Games allowed after 10 days of practice, not including Sundays

- F. Rosters shall be completed via the RIIL website and made available to the public no later than 10 days after the start of practice. Rosters must be updated when students are added/removed from the team.
  - 1. Rosters must include: name, grade, and jersey number.
  
- G. The visiting team is entitled to the field for practice thirty minutes prior to the game's start time and may continue until 10 minutes prior to the first pitch (20 minutes total). The home team will then have the field for five minutes, ten minutes prior to the first pitch. If the visiting team does not arrive in time to practice at the stated period, the home team may continue to use the field but must leave the field immediately when the visiting team does arrive.

#### **Section 4. POSTPONEMENTS**

- A. If a game is postponed for any reason, other than inclement weather, it must be postponed to a definite date with the consent of the schools and permission of the Director of Baseball.
  
- B. Where unusual circumstances prevail or where conditions are unfavorable, a game may be postponed by mutual consent of the opposing school's Principals, or authorized agents of the schools involved.
  
- C. The Director of Middle School Softball is empowered to exercise the right to postpone a game if the opposing school's Principals cannot agree. If in the judgment of the Plate Umpire, playing conditions at game time are too hazardous; the umpire may postpone the game without mutual agreement.
  
- D. The RIIL game-ending procedure is as follows: To interpret NFHS Rule 4-2-Sec.1, 2, 3 & 4:
  - 1. If a REGULATION game (4 (four) and ½ innings if the home team is ahead or 5 (five) complete innings if the visiting team is ahead) during the REGULAR SEASON (not a state tournament playoff game) is stopped for any reason other than forfeiture and a winner cannot be determined, the game is considered SUSPENDED and will be completed at a later date from the exact point of suspension. Only student-athletes listed on the original scorecard are eligible to participate in the suspended game's resumption. Only student-athletes eligible by all RIIL and school rules are eligible to be listed on a scorecard.
  - 2. Games that have not reached REGULATION length prior to suspension are considered NO GAME and must be replayed from the beginning.

3. All state playoff games are SUSPENDED from the first pitch regardless of the inning or score and must be continued from that point to completion.

## **Section 5. OFFICIALS**

The umpire's authority extends to pre-and post-game oversight. Fighting and unsportsmanlike penalties will always be within the authority of the umpires at the contest site. The umpires shall have jurisdiction over the playing facility areas from thirty minutes before the game until the game is finished and the teams have departed.-Umpires will be assigned by the RIIL Middle

## **Section 6. PLAYOFFS**

The Playoffs will be conducted under the direction of the Middle School Softball Sport Director using a format determined by the RIIL Executive Director and the Middle School Sports Coordinator and published with the RIIL Middle School 6-8 Softball Schedule.

- A. Softball Tie Breaker within the Division for Playoff Seeding: A tie-breaker will be used to seed teams with identical W-L records for the regular season:

1. Head-to-Head

- a. Three or More Teams: *Pool Play head-to-head – most wins in games played among those teams that are tied.*

2. Power Ranking/Strength of Victories: *(starting with 1<sup>st</sup> place team in the division and moving down)*

3. Coin Toss/Draw

- B. The top four teams in each Division will qualify for the playoffs (16 teams total). The playoffs will follow a bracket

## **Section 7: Medical Coverage/Emergency Action Plans**

- A. Home team medical coverage shall be responsible for both teams unless the visiting school provides its own medical coverage.
- B. The judgment of the medical person will be final with regard to the medical condition of a player. No player may continue to play against the medical person's advice under any circumstance.
- C. An Emergency Action Plan with clearly defined written and practice protocols should be developed and in place at every school. When possible, an athletic trainer should be present at all practices and games.
  - a. Rationale: An effective emergency action plan (EAP) should be in place as a prompt and appropriate response to any emergency situation that can save a life. The EAP

should be designed and practiced to address all teams (freshman, junior varsity, and varsity) and all practice and game sites. An athletic trainer is a key component in any strategy to minimize injury risk and optimize safety for all participants.

D. Levels of Medical Coverage:

<b><u>Medical Professional:</u></b>	<p><i>A. Education/Schooling/Training &amp; Licensure</i></p> <p><i>B. Scope of Practice</i></p> <p><i>C. Able to Return to Play</i></p>
<p><b>Medical Doctors- MD/DO Advanced Practice Provider-NP/PA</b></p>	<p>A. Advanced degree (Medical School/Successfully passed the licensing board, and RI Licensed)</p> <p>B. Preventative Care, On field Evaluation, Immediate Care, Diagnosis</p> <p>C. Can they Return to Play – Yes</p>
<p><b>Athletic Trainer RI Licensed</b></p>	<p>A. Minimum Bachelor's Degree (Successfully pass the BOC exam, and RI licensed)</p> <p>B. Preventative Care, On field Evaluation, Immediate Care, Assessment of injury, referral for further diagnosis</p> <p>C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – YES</p>
<p><b>Physical Therapist RI Licensed</b></p>	<p>A. Degree varies from BS, MS to DPT (Successfully pass the board exam, and RI licensed.)</p> <p>B. Preventative Care, Rehabilitation, Orthopedic exam evaluation</p> <p>C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – NO</p>
<p><b>Physical Therapist w/ Orthopedic Clinical Specialist (OCS) credential &amp; RI Licensed</b></p>	<p>A. Advanced Certification (Successfully pass the board exam, successfully complete requirements for and pass the OCS exam, and RI licensed)</p> <p>B. Rehabilitation, Orthopedic exam evaluation. On the field coverage - not qualified, no emergency training incorporated into initial certification or required to be annually updated.</p> <p>C. Can they Return to Play – NO (During a Game/Contest), Yes (In Clinical Setting)</p>
<p><b>Physical Therapists w/ Sports Certified Specialist</b></p>	<p>A. Advanced Certification (Successfully pass the board exam, successfully complete requirements for and pass the SCS exam, and RI licensed)</p>

<p><b>(SCS) credential &amp; RI Licensed</b></p>	<p>B. Rehabilitation, Orthopedic exam evaluation. On-the-field coverage – Qualified</p> <p>C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – YES</p>
<p><b>EMT - Basic, Intermediate &amp; Paramedic</b></p>	<p>A. Successfully complete the EMT program, pass the board exam, and RI licensed)</p> <p>B. Emergency care</p> <p>C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – NO, per RI EMS laws/regulations/protocols</p>
<p><b>School Nurse (RN)</b></p>	<p>A. Successful completion of a nursing program (Successfully pass the board exam, and RI licensed)</p> <p>B. Emergency care, referral for further treatment/diagnosis</p> <p>C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – NO</p>