



UNDER
THE
STRIPES

SOFTBALL

RULES REFERENCE

COLLEGIATE OFFICIALS QUICK GUIDE

2026-27 NCAA / CCA / NAIA CONTEXT

CODE & GENDER APPLICATION

The NCAA softball code governs women's collegiate softball; verify NAIA modifications.

Study aid only. Always use the current official rulebook, interpretations, mechanics manual, state or conference adoptions, bulletins and assignment instructions.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE CALLS

REAL OFFICIALS. REAL CONVERSATIONS. REAL IMPACT.

UNDER THE STRIPES NETWORK | VERIFIED JULY 23, 2026

1. Know Which Authority Controls

Topic	Collegiate reference
Rules authority	NCAA sport rulebook, approved interpretations and bulletins.
Mechanics authority	Use the current CCA manual when issued for the sport, plus NCAA coordinator/conference mechanics. CCA is not a separate playing-rules code.
NAIA layer	Most NAIA championship sports use an NCAA rules foundation with NAIA-approved modifications. Check the current NAIA sport manual and host-conference instructions.
Assignment control	The assigner/conference may prescribe crew size, replay availability, timing protocols, uniforms, reports and mechanics without rewriting the playing rule.

Pregame authority check

Topic	Collegiate reference
Code	Confirm NCAA, NAIA or another governing code.
Edition	Confirm rulebook year, interpretations and recent bulletins.
Mechanics	Confirm current manual, crew size, rotations and conference exceptions.
Technology	Confirm clocks, replay/challenge, headsets and approved communication.
Administration	Confirm rosters/lineups, timing personnel, reports and protest procedure.

2. Core Contest Reference

Topic	Collegiate reference
Game	Nine players; seven innings unless ended or modified by rule.
Field	60-foot bases; collegiate pitching distance 43 feet.
Pitching	Delivery, feet, hands, stride, leap/replant and release are governed by the NCAA code.
Lineup	DP/FLEX, substitutes and re-entry require exact tracking.
Obstruction	College softball obstruction protections and awards must be learned independently of baseball/NFHS.
Video review	Reviewable plays, coach challenges and technology depend on current NCAA and competition rules.

High-priority officiating focus

Topic	Collegiate reference
Illegal pitch	See the complete delivery and apply signal, ball status and penalty accurately.
Obstruction	Judge access/path, possession, fielding status and protection under the NCAA standard.
DP/FLEX	Maintain a written substitution record and verify re-entry eligibility.
Pace / review	Know timing responsibilities, challenge request window and post-review placement.

3. Differences and Assignment Notes

Topic	Collegiate reference
Program	NCAA championship softball is women's softball.
NAIA	NCAA foundation plus NAIA softball modifications and championship procedures.
CCA	Softball mechanics manual controls umpire positioning/coverage, not the playing rule.
Conference	Run rule, replay system, pace-of-play operation and reports may be supplemented.

Postgame self-review

Topic	Collegiate reference
Rule	Which ruling needs a rule/case-book check before the next game?
Mechanic	Did positioning, coverage and communication match the current manual?
Crew	What information improved or delayed the final decision?
Reports	Were ejections, fights, protests, replay issues and unusual incidents reported on time?

Official reference path

Topic	Collegiate reference
NCAA Playing Rules	https://www.ncaa.org/championships/playing-rules/
NCAA Publications	https://www.ncaapublications.com/
NAIA Rules & Policy	https://www.naia.org/membership/legislative-and-policy/
NAIA Sport Resources	https://www.naia.org/membership/resources/coaches-corner/
CCA manuals	Access the current authorized manual through the collegiate officiating/central hub or publisher.