

# GUIDELINES for 2024



*The mission of DIAMOND is to implement and develop teamwork, leadership and sportsmanship.*

**D=Determination I=Inspiring A=Assertive M=Motivated  
O=Optimistic N=Nurturing D=Dependable**

# **Texas DIAMOND Softball All-Stars Eligibility and Team Formation Guidelines & Rules Spring 2024**

These Guidelines and Rules are for the Spring 2024 Texas DIAMOND Softball All-Stars. The Board of Directors and members of the Rules Committee will schedule meetings each Fall to finalize or revise these guidelines and rules for each season.

Texas DIAMOND is organized and administered by an elected Board of Directors for the purpose of playing under an established set of guidelines and rules in order to provide an organized recreational tournament series for softball players.

***THE OBJECTIVE IS TO PROVIDE TOURNAMENT PLAY THAT  
WILL BE FUN, SAFE AND COMPETITIVE.***

Each participating association must designate a representative who will be the sole contact between that association and Texas DIAMOND.

DIAMOND will start meetings in the Fall of any given year and meet as many times as possible. It is the goal of the Texas DIAMOND Committee to issue revised rules and regulations for the upcoming Spring to participate associations.

# Table of Contents

---

Team Formation	Page 3
Registration Process and Procedures	Page 4
Tournament Costs	Page 5
Tournament Format & Games	Page 6
Tournament Rules	Pages 7 - 10
Slowpitch Supplemental Rules	Page 10
Protests	Page 11
Umpires	Page 12
Code of Conduct	Page 13
Appendix A: Required Stamps for Helmets and Bats	Page 14
Appendix B: Explanation of DP/Flex	Page 15
Appendix C: Sample Line-up Card	Page 16
Appendix D: Playing Field Dimensions	Page 17
Appendix E: Playing Field Graphics	Page 18

# TEAM FORMATION

Each participating association can enter up to **2** All-Star teams per age division.

Teams must be approved by Texas DIAMOND before teams are allowed to play in any Texas DIAMOND series tournament. The players selected by the participating association for each All-Star team must be eligible to play in the appropriate age bracket for the team they are on. Players will not be allowed to play down an age division but can play up an age division as long as they played during the season.

- 1) All players must have played for a recreational team with the association they are registered with during the Spring season.
- 2) Associations may interlock to form a team if they played each other during the season.
- 3) Players must participate in half of the teams' regular season games (minimum of 12 scheduled games) to be eligible for Texas DIAMOND. Each Texas DIAMOND team can have up to **15** (max) players and 12 (Minimum) players on the affidavit as well as four coaches.
- 4) No Texas DIAMOND team may have more than **ONE** player who played for a travel, select or tournament team, such as Triple Crown, NSA, USAAA etc. between January 1, 2024 to June 1, 2024 as long as they meet the other requirements to be a Texas DIAMOND All-Star Team. **This will only be for the 2024 season.**
- 5) Each team can only have four coaches in the dugout during the games.
- 6) Any exception to the above team formation rules must be approved by the Rules Committee prior to the tournament series.
- 7) Teams, Coaches or Players found to be in violation of any of the above rules will be subject to penalties, deemed appropriate by the Rules Committee, including but not limited to suspension and/or exclusion from any or all Texas DIAMOND games and tournament series.

# **REGISTRATION PROCESS AND PROCEDURES**

- 1) To play in DIAMOND, each participating association must register teams for each division that are playing in the tournament.
- 2) Each teams' binder **will** be checked and approved by the Texas DIAMOND Board of Directors. In 2024, team binders will be retained by Texas DIAMOND for the duration of the All-Star series. It must include:
  - a) Official Team Affidavit signed by the association.
  - b) Team Picture
  - c) Each Player's Individual Picture
  - d) Each Player's Birth Certificate
  - e) Medical Release Form
  - f) Proof of Insurance Certificate
  - g) Code of Conduct Form (signed by each Coach, Player and Parents)
- 3) Coaches must always have their team binder available during every tournament. Team binders will be randomly checked periodically through all three tournaments.
- 4) Once a binder has been approved by the Texas DIAMOND Board of Directors, it may not be altered. The original team binder will be retained by the Texas DIAMOND board of directors for the duration of the All-Star series.

# **TOURNAMENT COST**

- 1) Cost for each team will be determined by the Texas DIAMOND Board of Directors.
- 2) The cost will cover field rental, field maintenance, player awards, supplies to run the series, tournament supplies, insurance (if necessary) and any other cost incurred by the host association.
- 3) Each team will pay umpires at the plate prior to the start of each game. The game will not start until that transaction between the teams and the on field umpires occurs. Any teams that do not show up for a game without communicating with the Tournament Director will be subject to paying Both umpires. The team will not be allowed to play in any other Texas DIAMOND game or tournament series for that summer until that has been paid.
- 4) Host association cannot charge gate entry fees.
- 5) The host association can raise additional funds for their program through vendor rentals, concessions, etc.

# TOURNAMENT FORMAT & GAMES

- 1) Texas DIAMOND All-Star will consist of **3** tournaments starting in the month of June.
- 2) Texas DIAMOND Pool Tournament
  - a) Texas DIAMOND teams will participate in a three-game guarantee bracket.
  - b) Teams will be entered into a bracket by a double-blind draw.
  - c) This tournament will determine seeding for the Texas DIAMOND Elite tournament bracket.
- 3) Texas DIAMOND Elite Tournament
  - a) Texas DIAMOND teams will compete in a three-game guarantee bracket. Teams will be seeded for this tournament based on performance in the Pool Tournament.
  - b) Teams will be seeded based on the outcome of the Pool Tournament in the following order:
    - i) Teams' tournament record
    - ii) Head to Head: win-loss between teams with identical records.
    - iii) Run differential: Runs Scored-Runs Allowed = Run Differential
    - iv) Coin Flip
- 4) Texas DIAMOND Platinum/Championship Tournament
  - a) Texas DIAMOND teams will compete in a three-game guarantee bracket. Teams will be seeded for this tournament based on performance in the Elite Tournament. This will be the championship series where teams will be divided into two brackets according to standings.
  - b) Teams will be seeded based on the outcome of the Elite Tournament in the following order:
    - i) Teams' tournament record
    - ii) Head to Head: win-loss between teams with identical records.
    - iii) Run differential: Runs Scored-Runs Allowed = Run Differential
    - iv) Coin Flip
- 5) Tournament locations and dates **TBD** by the Texas DIAMOND board each year.

# **TOURNAMENT RULES**

- 1) Each tournament will follow rules established by the Texas DIAMOND Rules Committee.
- 2) Warm-ups are only permitted where the host association has designated. Hitting may only happen in batting cages or on the field. **NO BATS** or **HITTING STICKS** allowed in the complex.
- 3) Each team must supply 2 balls at the beginning of the game. They must be approved by the umpires.
- 4) The Home team will be determined by a coin-flip by a Field Director appointed by the Texas DIAMOND Board of Directors 30 minutes prior to the game time listed on the official bracket at the assigned field. A line-up should be given to the Field Director at the coin-flip from each team.
- 5) The official line-up should consist of jersey number, last name, and first initial of each player. If you have a duplicate last name, the first name needs to be spelled out completely. You must specify your pitcher/catcher, EP, and DP/Flex.  
**6U/8U:** Pitching coaches **MUST** be listed on the line-up card.
- 6) Official tournament score book will be required to be kept by the home team. The scorekeeper will sit behind home plate with the Texas DIAMOND Field Director and must know how to scorekeep. The scorekeeper may not keep the official scorebook as well as the team scorebook. They will **NOT** be allowed to communicate with the coaches or spectators during the game. If the team cannot provide a scorekeeper, they will forfeit the home team position.
- 7) Home team will occupy the third base dugout and the visiting team will occupy the first base dugout. Teams are responsible for cleaning up their dugouts and spectator stands after the game.
- 8) Bats, helmets and catcher gear will be inspected **prior to each game**. Be sure your team puts all gear outside the dugout for inspection as soon as you are allowed to enter the dugout.
- 9) Any bats labeled T-Ball or Baseball will not be allowed during the game. Those bats will be turned over to the UIC and will be returned after the last game of the tournament for that team.

- 10) All bats must have the USA/ASA approved certification mark and must not be listed on the banned bat list. Those bats will be turned over to the UIC and will be returned after the last game of the tournament for that team.
- 11) **Coaches are not allowed to stand outside the dugout while their team is on the field. Coaches must remain in the coach's box while on offense. All coaches in the dugout or on the field must be listed on the official team affidavit.**
- 12) **No cellular devices on the field including the dugout during game play.**
- 13) Game Balls
- a) Optic yellow 11" balls with a Maximum compression of 375 lbs and max COR of .47 can be used for 6U, 8U and 10U games.
  - b) Optic yellow 12" balls with a maximum compression of 375 lbs and max COR of .47 can be used for 12U and 14U games.
- 14) **6U:** The Batter's box will be 8' x 3' on both sides of home plate. **8U-14U:** The Batter's boxes will be 7' x 3' where 4' will be in front of the midline of home plate. Inside lines will be 6" from the edges of the home plate.
- 15) Games will go to a modified International tie breaking (ITB) rule if there is a tie at the end of the game. The offensive team shall begin its turn at bat.
- a) Extra innings will start with 2 outs and bases loaded.
  - b) This will continue until a winner is determined,
  - c) ITB base runners will be based on last completed at bat per the line-up card.
- 16) Line-ups will be given to the plate umpire at the plate meeting prior to the start of the game.
- 17) All 6U/8U teams must have at least nine players to start a game. All 10U-14U teams must have at least eight players to start a game. The tenth batting position in 6U/8U will be an automatic out. The ninth batting position in 10U-14U will be an automatic out.
- 18) Sliding into the base feet first is allowed. Sliding head first for 6U & 8U is **NOT** allowed and that player will be called out. Diving back to the base is allowed.

- 19) The run rule per half inning for **6U/8U** is 7 runs. Game will be called when a team is mathematically unable to win. Run rule for **10U-14U** is 10 runs per half inning. Run rule is 12 at the end of the 2nd inning; 10 at the end of the 3rd inning; 8 at the end of the 4th inning; 6 at the end of the 5th inning.
- 20) **Time-outs:** There are 4 defensive conferences allowed per game. Each team may have 2 time-outs per half inning; at the 3rd conference, you must replace the pitcher. The starting pitcher only that was subbed out can return to the mound one time.
- 21) All buckets and equipment must be inside the dugout **AT ALL TIMES** during the game.
- 22) **Game Duration**
- a) 6U-8U games will be 60 minutes, finish the inning.
  - b) 10U-14U games will be 75 minutes, finish the inning.
- 23) **ALL CATCHERS MUST WEAR APPROPRIATE CATCHER'S GEAR.**
- 24) Batting helmets must have a face mask. IF the batting helmet has a chin strap, it has to be worn correctly.
- 25) It is **REQUIRED** that pitchers wear a protective face guard. We **highly recommend that** all players on defense wear a protective face guard and the player in the pitcher position wear a heart guard.

## Slow Pitch Supplemental Rules

### 6U/8U:

- 1) Time will be called when the ball is in possession of an infielder and the lead runner has stopped or hesitated to advance to the next base. If the ball is in possession of the infielder but the base runner has not stopped or hesitated, the play is still live and runners are allowed to advance bases.
- 2) Team conference at change of half innings is not allowed. First infraction will be a warning, second infraction will be ejection of coach.
- 3) Each team must have at least 10-players on defense. Only six (6) players can be in the infield including pitcher and catcher. The outfield is considered behind the baseline.
- 4) The outfielder must be at least 10' behind the baseline. The baseline is home plate to first base; first base to second base; second base to third base and third base to home plate.

### 8U Only:

- 1) If the coach pitcher is hit with a batted ball, a no pitch will be called. If, at the umpire's discretion, the coach pitcher intentionally allows the ball to strike him/her, a dead ball will be called. The batter will be declared out and all base runners will return to the base they occupied before the pitch.
  - a) Each team will provide their own pitching coach. The coach pitcher must be listed as a coach on the official team affidavit. The pitching distance is 40 feet. The ball must be delivered to the batter in a safe manner and no arch required. The Pitching Coach may not continue to step forward towards the batter after the ball is pitched. Pitched ball is dead when it hits the ground prior to home plate. Batter cannot hit a ball that first touches the ground.
  - b) The **Pitcher Coach cannot communicate** verbally or signal to the batter. The coach cannot communicate with the other coaches while the play is still live.
  - c) Once the ball is hit fair, the coach pitcher must move to the side of the field, the opposite direction of where the ball is hit. When the coach interferes with an offensive player, the play stands. When the coach

unintentionally interferes with a defensive player then the umpire has the option to call a baserunner out, if intentional, then the runner will be called out.

- d) Each batter will receive 4 pitches; 3 called strikes by the umpire; or . unlimited fouls on the 4th pitch. If the batter does not make contact on the next pitch, she will be out.

## **PROTESTS**

- 1) There will be no protest allowed on any judgment calls.
  - a) Balls and Strikes
  - b) Fair and Foul Ball
  - c) Safe and Out
  - d) Legal vs. Illegal Pitch
  - e) Application of Obstruction or Interference
  - f) Any other matter questioning the accuracy of the umpire's judgment
- 2) A formal protest may only be made regarding rules.
- 3) Only the Head Coach, as listed on the official team affidavit, is allowed to notify the plate umpire of a formal protest **BEFORE** the next pitch.
- 4) The clock will be stopped at time of the protest. Once the Protest Committee arrives, they will have the clock resumed.
- 5) No protest can be called after the completion (the last official out) of the game.
- 6) The Protest Committee will consist of the UIC/Appointed Representative, Texas DIAMOND Tournament Director/Appointed Director. The Protest Committee's decisions are FINAL.

# **UMPIRES**

- 1) All umpires must be registered with a recognized organization of officials such as TASO, etc.
- 2) The UIC will determine if an umpire has the credentials to work games in any Texas DIAMOND Softball All-Stars.
- 3) The UIC will schedule umpires for each tournament. No requests for umpires can be made.
- 4) All games will have 2 umpire mechanics. If an umpire is not available or cannot continue with the game, the UIC/Asst. UIC will make the decision for the game to proceed with a replacement or with 1 umpire mechanic.
- 5) All umpires must be properly dressed as decided by the Texas DIAMOND Board of Directors.

# **CODE OF CONDUCT**

- 1) There will be no consumption of alcoholic beverages at the complex at any time. Including parking lots, batting cages, and warmup areas.
- 2) Smoking, vaping or tobacco use is prohibited at any complex at any time.
- 3) Cheering words of encouragement to your players is acceptable.
- 4) Profanity used inside the complex is unacceptable behavior. This also includes any music being played.
- 5) Harassing or name calling of any softball official, players from either team, coaches from either team, etc. either at the facility or on social media is NOT ACCEPTABLE AND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- 6) Zero tolerance to all policies are in effect at every complex. Any player, manager, coach or fan ejected from a game must leave the complex immediately and will not be allowed to participate for the continuation plus the next following game. Longer suspensions may be applied by the Texas DIAMOND board. During the ejection, the person may not be at the complex.
- 7) If an ejected person wants to appeal their ejection, they can contact Texas DIAMOND Board with their request. The DIAMOND board will review the request and determine the resolution on a case by case situation.
- 8) Cooperation with the team parent's representative or official team representative on duty at any game is to be expected of every parent/guardian.
- 9) Parents/Guardians will always exhibit and support sportsmanship to his or her best ability.
- 10) Game officials are assigned by the Texas DIAMOND Committee. Parents and/or coaches will have no input as to which officials are assigned to any game.

# Appendix A: Required Stamps for Helmets and Bats

Batting Helmet:



Catchers Helmet:

Manufacturer Certifies



Bat Stamps:



## **Appendix B: Explanation of EP/DP/Flex**

1. Straight 9 - 9 batters
2. Straight 9 plus 1 EP - 10 batters
3. Straight 9 plus 2 EP's - 11 batters
4. Straight 9 with DP/FLEX - 9 batters -  
Flex in the 10th spot defense ONLY
5. Straight 9 with DP/FLEX plus 1 EP - 10 batters -  
Flex in the 11 spot - defense ONLY

## **Appendix C: Sample Line-up Card**

## Appendix D: Playing Field Dimensions

	Pitching Rubber Distance	Base Path Distance	Minimum Fence Distances (Recommended)	Maximum Fence Distance (Recommended)
6U Division	35 feet	55 feet	150 feet	175 feet
8U Division	40 feet	55 feet	150 feet	175 feet
10U Division	35 feet	60 feet	175 feet	225 feet
12U Division	40 feet	60 feet	200 feet	225 feet
14U & Up Divisions	43 feet	60 feet	200 feet	225 feet

- The Batter's Boxes will be 7' x 3' where 4' will be in front of the midline of home plate. Inside lines will be 6" from the edges of the home plate.
- Pitchers Circles will be a 8' radius from the center of the pitching rubber.
- The 3' running lane will begin at the halfway point between home plate and first base.
- 6u Only:
  - The Batter's box will be 8' x 3', the box will be 4' on either side of the midline of home plate.
  - Tees will be placed point - to - point.

# Appendix E: Playing Field Graphics



