

Softball

Section I - Championship Eligibility

The following schools compete for the conference championship in softball: Dickinson, Franklin & Marshall, Gettysburg, Haverford, McDaniel, Muhlenberg, Swarthmore, Ursinus and Washington.

Section II - Softball Committee

Chair: Matt Richwine, Dickinson.

Liaison: Kim Lessard, Washington.

Section III - Playing Season Regulations

- A. Length of Playing Season.** The length of an institution's playing season in softball shall be limited to a maximum of 19 weeks (traditional and nontraditional segments combined). *(Adopted 1/12/04)*
- B. Traditional Segment.**
- 1. Preseason Practice.** A member institution shall not commence practice sessions before February 1. *(Revised 6/4/03)*
 - 2. First Contest or Date of Competition.** An institution shall not play its first contest (including a scrimmage) against outside competition prior to March 1. If March 1 falls between Sunday through Friday, a contest may be scheduled for the previous weekend in lieu of competition during that week. Teams that utilize this option are prohibited from scheduling a game or scrimmage during the following weekdays (Sunday-Friday). In the event an institution's spring break begins prior to March 1, the first date of competition may be played on the first day of spring break. *(Revised 6/4/03; Revised 9/23/05; Revised 5/28/08)*
 - 3. Maximum Limitations.** An institution shall limit its playing schedule with outside competition in any one year to 45 contests (with no more than 40 in the traditional segment and five in the nontraditional segment), except for those contests excluded in the *NCAA Manual*. *(Revised 8/1/01)*
 - 4. Classes in Session.** No more than 30 contests may be played while classes are in session during the traditional segment. There is no limitation on contests during listed vacation periods. *(Adopted 6/4/03)*
- C. Nontraditional Segment**
- 1. Preseason Practice.** Preseason practice may not begin before September 1 or the first date on which classes are scheduled for the institution's fall term, whichever date occurs first.
 - 2. First Contest or Date of Competition.** An institution shall not play its first contest (game or scrimmage) with outside competition before September 7 or the institution's first day of classes for the fall term, whichever is earlier.
 - 3. Nontraditional Season Length.** All practice and competition during the nontraditional segment shall be limited to a maximum of five weeks and must conclude by October 30.
 - 4. Practice Opportunities.** The Conference permits a maximum of 16 practices with no more than four practices in any one week. *(Revised 6/4/03)*
 - 5. Maximum Limitations.** The Conference permits one date of competition with outside competition that is counted toward the allowable 16 practices (*i.e.* 15 practices + 1 DOC = 16; 16 practices + 0 DOC = 16). *(Revised 6/4/03)*
 - a. Exemption - Alumni Game.** The Conference also permits one date of competition against an alumni team that is counted toward the allowable 16 practices. *(Revised 5/28/08)*
 - 6. Class/Laboratory Time.** No class or laboratory time may be missed for practice or competition.
 - 7. Date of Competition Limitations.** A maximum of eight hours of athletically related activity may occur on the one date of competition for all participants. Further, competition activity on the one date must be included in the eight-hour maximum and is also limited to two regulation baseball games or 18 regulation innings (e.g., three outs per inning, three strikes per out). *(Revised 4/17/07)*

Section IV - Rules Governing Championship

All NCAA championship rules apply unless amended below.

- A. Determining the Conference Champion.** The Conference champion will be determined by a four-team double-elimination playoff. The teams will be determined by the best won-loss records in a round-robin format. The top seed will be the host for the tournament.
- B. Tournament Format**
- 1. Home Team.** The higher seed is the home team for the first round. Thereafter, the NCAA tournament procedure will determine the home team. *(Revised 6/4/03)*
 - 2. Schedule.**

Day 1

Game 1: No. 2 seed vs. No. 3 seed

Game 2: No. 1 seed vs. No. 4 seed

Game 3: Loser of Game 1 vs. Loser of Game 2

Game 4: Winner of Game 1 vs. Winner of Game 2

Day 2

Game 5: Loser of Game 4 vs. Winner of Game 3

Game 6: Winner of Game 4 vs. Winner of Game 5

Game 7 if necessary, only if Winner of Game 5 wins Game 6

3. Starting Times. The starting times for the tournament are determined by the Executive Director and the committee liaison. It is recommended that the first game on both days begin at 10 a.m. (*Adopted 6/7/00; Revised 6/1/05*)

C. Tournament Dates. The tournament will be held on the weekend of the NCAA tournament selection. (*Revised 6/5/02*)

1. Head-to-Head Centennial Conference play among tied teams;
2. Record versus teams in descending order of standing;
3. Run differential: Runs allowed versus runs scored in Centennial Conference games;
4. if criteria 1-2-3 does not break the tie
 - a. for the final playoff position, a play-in game will be held. The Executive Director will conduct a coin flip to determine the site;
 - b. for other ties among playoff-bound teams, the Executive Director will conduct a coin flip to determine playoff position. In the event of multiple ties, a random drawing will be held for the playoff positions.

When any secondary criteria separates one or more tied teams, but does not completely break the tie among all teams involved, re-apply the criteria to all groups of teams still tied, starting with the Conference's primary tiebreaker for all sports (head-to-head Centennial competition). (*Revised 6/4/03; Revised 6/9/04*)

D. Incomplete Tournament. If the championship tournament cannot be completed and each team has completed at least one tournament contest, the highest remaining seed will be the Conference's champion and automatic qualifier to the NCAA tournament. Otherwise, the top seed as determined by the regular season will receive the automatic qualifier. (*Adopted 6/5/02; Revised 6/9/04*)

E. Dugouts. The higher seed will take the third-base dugout. (*Adopted 6/6/01*)

F. Umpires. The Conference Office will secure a team of umpires for the Conference playoffs. The team of umpires will consist of four umpires for the entire weekend, including an Umpire-in-Chief. (*Adopted 6/5/02*)

G. Practice at Championship Site

1. No practice will be permitted at the championship site (host team excluded) prior to game day.
2. No practice on the game field prior to the semifinals. (*Adopted 6/9/04*)

Section V - Regulations Governing Competition

All NCAA/ASA Fast Pitch Rules apply unless amended below.

A. Starting Times. All conference games should not begin before 2:30 p.m. on weekdays and no later than 1 p.m. on weekends.

B. Pre-Game Procedure. The visiting team will be accorded 30 minutes of warm-up time prior to the contracted game starting time.

C. Length of Games. All conference games will be seven innings in length.

D. Break between Doubleheader Games. There should be at least a 15-minute break between games of a doubleheader.

E. Postponed Games. All postponed Conference games will be rescheduled upon mutual agreement by the coaches or administrators. Makeup games shall be played on the first available calendar date when neither team is scheduled, with consideration for religious holidays. In the final week of regularly scheduled Conference play, a postponed Conference game will be rescheduled for the next available date and shall have priority over non-Conference games. (*Adopted 6/15/94; Revised 6/2/99*)

F. Official Ball. The official ball of the Centennial Conference will be the ball used for NCAA Championship competition.

G. Umpires. Umpires must be NCAA certified officials. (*Revised 6/3/98; Revised 6/2/99*)

H. Protective Gear. All batters, base runners and catchers must wear protective helmets at all times.

I. Pitchers' Warm-Up. No pitcher shall be allowed to warm-up on the pitching rubber of the game field. (*Adopted 6/4/97*)

J. Tie-Breaking Procedure. Starting with the top of the predetermined inning (it is recommended for use beginning in the 10th inning) and each half-inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat ninth in that half-inning being placed on second base. A substitute may be inserted for the runner. This procedure is not in effect for the Conference championship tournament. (*Adopted 6/7/95*)

- K. Eight-Run Rule.** A regulation eight-run game shall be declared by the plate umpire if one team is ahead by eight or more runs after five or more equal innings. *(Adopted 6/15/94)*
- L. Breakaway Bases.** The Conference mandates the use of breakaway bases. *(Adopted 6/4/97)*
- M. Tied Games.** In case of a tied game, the game will be replayed in its entirety at the original site, if deemed necessary by the Executive Director.
- N. Post-Game Procedures.** At the conclusion of every inning and the end of every Centennial contest, scorers will meet to compare scorebooks. Discrepancies must be resolved at the field. If no agreement can be reached, the home team's scorebook will be considered official. *(Revised 6/1/05)*
- O. Safety Fences.** It is strongly recommended that all Centennial Conference games be played on a field with a chain-link safety fence, at least six feet in height, in front of the player/coaching benches. *(Adopted 6/2/99)*
- P. Outfield Fence.** It is strongly recommended that all Conference schools have an outfield home run fence at the distance determined by the NCAA (190-225 feet). *(Adopted 6/6/01)*
- Q. Jewelry.** Due to the potential for bodily injury, dismemberment, or even death, this policy regarding the wearing of jewelry, body piercing articles, and symbolic bracelets is recommended for all practices and games of Centennial Conference athletes. Tongue studs, spacers, or other objects are discouraged due to the potential for an obstructed airway or soft tissue damage. Protective mouthpieces are excluded from this policy. A player should not wear any jewelry, including earrings, chains, charms, watches, hair clips, bobby pins, tongue studs or items associated with piercing (visible or not visible), or bracelets. Exception: Medical alert bracelets or necklaces may be worn but should be taped to the body. Religious medals should be removed from chains and may be taped to the body or sewn under the uniform. *(Adopted 6/1/05)*

Section VI - Awards

- A. All-Conference Team.** At the conclusion of the regular season, the conference coaches will select an All-Conference team. The team will comprise of two starting pitchers, one catcher, first baseman, second baseman, shortstop, third baseman, catcher, three outfielders, one designated player and one utility player. The coaches will also select a Player of Pitcher of the Year. *(Revised 6/5/96; Revised 6/2/99)*
 - 1. Nominations.** Approximately seven days before the conclusion of the regular season, each coach of a participating Conference school should submit nominations of his/her athletes to be considered for All-Centennial status. No Conference-wide limit is made to the number of nominations that can be made for All-Conference consideration, although nominees should be starters or key reserves. Only one player may be nominated for Player of the Year status.
 - a. Players will be eligible for nomination at only one position on the ballot.
 - b. Players nominated at a specific position should have played at least 50% of the conference games at that position.
 - c. Players nominated at the Utility position must have played at least two or more positions with not more than 60% of playing time at one position. The breakdown should be indicated on the nominating form (example: 10/SS, 12/OF, 14/DP); Summary: 36 games, 3 positions played. (This is the NFCA Criteria for All-region).
 - d. Player of the Year candidates must be nominated at one of the 8 non-pitching positions on the ballot.
 - 2. Voting Procedure.** Shortly after the conclusion of the regular season and prior to the start of the championship tournament, voting for All-Centennial teams should be concluded. Coaches should vote for 1st and 2nd team selections, and a Player of the Year. **No coach can vote for his/her own player!** The completed ballot should be returned to the Director of Sports Information and sent via email or FAX to the Conference Office.
 - 3. Determination of All-Conference Team.** Two (2) points will be awarded for a 1st team vote and one (1) point for a 2nd team vote. Players with the most points shall be accorded 1st team All-Centennial status. Ties will be broken in favor of the candidate with the highest number of 1st team votes. If the tie is still not broken, additional players may be added to the All-Star team. Any athlete receiving four (4) points will be assured of at least honorable mention status.
 - 4. Determination of Player and Pitcher of the Year.** For Player of the Year honors, coaches should vote for 1st, 2nd and 3rd with five points for a 1st place vote, three for a 2nd place vote, and one for a 3rd place vote. **Once again, coaches cannot vote for his/her own player.** Ties will not be broken and co-winners will be named. The top vote-getter among the pitching nominees will be named Pitcher of the Year.
 - 5. Determination of Coach of the Year.** For Coach of the Year honors, coaches will be asked to nominate **one** opposing coach for Coach of the Year. Coaches should vote for 1st, 2nd and 3rd with five points for a 1st place vote, three for a 2nd place vote, and one for a 3rd place vote. **Once again, coaches may not vote for themselves.** Ties will not be broken and co-winners will be named.
- B. Weekly Honors.** The Conference Office, in cooperation with the Sports Information Directors committee, will recognize a Player and Pitcher of the Week for individual performances during a selected period.

C. Academic Honor Roll. To be nominated/selected for the Academic Honor Roll, a student-athlete must meet the following criteria:

1. The student-athlete must be a starter or key reserve on her/his team.
2. Must be a sophomore or higher in class standing.
3. Must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.40 or higher (or its equivalent as determined by the institution) based on a 4.0 scale. The GPA must be at least 3.40, not 3.39 and rounded to the nearest tenth of a point.

D. All-Sportsmanship Team. All institutions will elect one member from their team who displays good sportsmanship throughout the season to be a member of the All-Centennial sportsmanship team. These individuals will be selected by the team and head coach and submitted to the Conference Office as part of the All-Conference nomination process. Only one student from each team may be selected. All institutions will have one representative on the All-CC sportsmanship team with the final decision made by each institution's head coach. (*Adopted 5/30/07*)

Section VIII - Calendar

Start of Practice:	Sunday, February 1, 2009
First Contest:	Saturday, February 28 (<i>with stipulations</i>) or Sunday, March 1, 2009
All-CC Nominations Due:	Thursday, April 23, 2009
All-CC Ballot Due:	Tuesday, April 28, 2009
Conference Tournament:	Saturday-Sunday, May 2-3, 2009
Committee Meeting:	Tuesday, May 5, 2009
NCAA Regionals:	May 7-11, 2009
2009 NCAA Finals:	May 15-19, 2009
2010 NCAA Finals:	May 21-25, 2010