



June 11, 2024

NFHS Softball Fast Pitch Ball Clarification

An update to the NFHS Softball 12" Fast Pitch ball specifications was adopted in 2021. The new specifications were acceptable for use starting in the 2022 softball season. As with most technical changes of this type, there was a phase-in period allotted for the transition. Softballs manufactured to the new specifications must be utilized starting January 1, 2025. As state associations begin their final preparation for this transition there have been a few questions about this change and this document was prepared to help answer some of the frequently asked questions.

Do I have to replace all my existing inventory of softballs as of January 1, 2025? No, according to the SFIA, manufacturers began making softballs to these new specifications soon after they were updated in 2021. If you purchased your current inventory after 2021, the softballs are compliant. This change was made to better define and govern the manufacturing process in order to provide a more consistent product.

Will the marking on the ball be different? No, the ball will still have the same NFHS Authenticating Mark, COR .47 max and 375 Max compression markings.

How can I determine if my current inventory is compliant with the new specifications? There are a few ways to tell, one is the date of manufacture. If your inventory was manufactured in the last three years, it is reasonable to say it is compliant with the new specifications. In addition to this, some manufactures updated their model numbers as a part of this adjustment in specifications. The distributor that you purchased your softballs from should be able to help you identify if the manufacturer of your specific softball did update their model numbers and if so which model you have in inventory.

How can an umpire determine if game balls provided are compliant with the new specifications? Since the schools and/or state associations provide the game balls, compliance to these new specifications lies with them. An umpire will continue to inspect the game balls to ensure they have the proper NFHS Authenticating Mark, coefficient of restitution (COR) and maximum compression value as specified in rules 1-3-3 and 1-3-8.