



JENNIE FINCH  
SOFTBALL ACADEMY



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# SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT RULES & PARK POLICIES

F L E M I N G T O N , N E W J E R S E Y



\* UPDATED 4/29/24 \*

[www.DiamondNation.com](http://www.DiamondNation.com) | (908) 284-1778 | 129 River Road, Flemington, NJ 08822

WEATHER HOTLINE: (908) 284-1778 X 150

# FACILITY RULES & INFORMATION

## ADMISSION

There is an entry fee for all spectators 18 years and older. All tickets must be purchased in advance through our online ticket platform.

## PARKING

Parking is free for the Diamond Nation events. There is plenty of space to park your vehicle for the Diamond Nation tournaments. The parking lot is right next to the baseball fields. If additional parking is needed, please follow the signs directing you to the auxiliary lot across the street. We ask that all fans/players cross at the traffic light. Please do not park directly on the road. Cars that are double parked, parked on the road, or not parked in marked spots are subject to towing at the owner's expense. Buses and RV's are required to park in the dirt auxiliary parking lot across the street from the complex.

## PARK RULES

- No Smoking
- No Alcohol
- No Tobacco Use
- No Pets
- 1 Personal-Sized Cooler Allowed
- No Heating or Cooling Units of Any Kind
- No bicycles, scooters, roller skates, skateboards, hover boards
- No public music players or noise makers in the stands nor the dugouts/fields

## MANDATORY HOTEL BOOKING POLICY

*To participate in any Diamond Nation Tournament, all teams that will be staying overnight are required to book hotel accommodations at one of the listed Diamond Nation host hotels offered at discounted prices. Visit our Hotel Partner website: [www.diamondnation.com/about-us/hotel-partners-2](http://www.diamondnation.com/about-us/hotel-partners-2) for details on rates and how to book your rooms.*

## INSURANCE

Each team is required to have proof of insurance with them at all times. Proof must also be provided to Diamond Nation prior to the tournament. The insurance certificate must have no less than \$2,000,000 General Aggregate and \$1,000,000 Each Occurrence. Insurance certificate must have "Diamond Nation, Sandlot Baseball Holdings, LLC, and their affiliates" listed as the certificate holder and additionally insured. Address is 129 River Rd., Flemington, NJ 08822.

## ROSTERS

All rostering is done through the LeagueApps registration platform. The roster size can be unlimited for the number of players on the team. There can be no more than 3 complimentary admitted coaches allowed in the tournament. A team can add to the roster all the way up to the first game. If an unforeseeable circumstance happens during tournament play where a coach needs to add to his roster he must immediately submit his reasoning to the tournament committee and the committee will then either grant or deny his request. A player can be on the roster for two different age groups, but not on multiple teams within a single age group. If a player's name shows up on multiple rosters, he/she must designate which team he/she is officially on. If a player is not on the roster and is playing in a game that player will be immediately ejected from both the current game and the rest of the tournament. The current game will NOT revert back. Play will continue as it was at the point of ejection. You MUST submit a roster in order to play your first game. Rosters need to be submitted no later than the Monday before the tournament start date.

## UMPIRES

All games that are played in the Diamond Nation tournaments will have two umpires scheduled for each game.

## SOFTBALLS / EQUIPMENT / UNIFORMS / CLEATS

Game balls will be provided by Diamond Nation for all games.

Teams are to bring their own practice balls for batting cage and warm up. Teams also should bring helmets, bats, gloves, catchers gear, first aid and other equipment that may be needed for your team.

Teams are to be in full uniform once they are on the field. All players must have a uniform number.

**NO METAL CLEATS! *Players MUST wear turfs, plastic molded cleats, or sneakers on our fields.*** We recommend that all players bring their metal spikes with them in case tournament director or site director gives permission to wear them due to weather related circumstances. Coaches are not required to wear full uniform during the games. We do expect the coaches to dress appropriately on the field. Coaches do not need to wear helmets while coaching 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base; however, the players need to wear helmets if they go out to coach 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base. *\*Please note that some off-site field locations are dirt/grass and metal cleats can be used on those surfaces.*

*\*Diamond Nation is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or unattended personal items/equipment. We ask that players, coaches, and fans keep personal items and equipment with them at all times in order to eliminate any issues that may arise in this manner.*

## **BATTING CAGES/PRE-GAME**

Use of batting cages will be on a first come first serve basis. Diamond Nation offers 5 indoor cages and 10 outdoor cages. Indoor cages are fully reserved for Diamond Nation's in-house travel teams, The Diamond Jacks and Finch's Aces. All other teams must use the outdoor batting cages. Batting cages must be occupied by only one batter at a time. All batters must wear a helmet and all pitchers must throw from behind a pitching screen. We ask that teams only occupy one cage and be respectful of other teams waiting to use the cage. There is no pre-game infield/outfield. There may be certain times when the tournament committee limits cage time to 20 minutes per team in order to accommodate the large number of teams attending.

## **FOUL BALLS**

We would ask for all players, coaches, fans, and parents to be aware of foul balls at all times. There will be more than one game going on at a time, which can cause foul balls from different fields. Please return all foul balls to the umpire or the tournament director.

## **FIRST AID & AED**

There will be first aid equipment on site for all of our tournament games. The local first aid squad is on call in an event of injury. Hunterdon Medical Center is less than one mile away in case of a serious injury.

## **CONCESSIONS**

Our concession stand will be open during all of the Diamond Nation tournaments. The concession stand hours of operation are from 7:00AM until the start of the last game. Weekday hours vary based on need. The concession staff is willing to work with your teams. If you want to place an order for a team breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack, or drinks please pick up an order form from the concession building and we can have an order ready at any specified time.

## **\*\*ALLERGEN STATEMENT\*\***

Please be advised that any of our products may contain, or may have come in contact with, allergens including Eggs, Fish, Milk, Peanuts, Shellfish, Soy, Tree Nuts and Wheat.

## **AWARDS**

A team trophy will be presented to the top 2 finishers of all tournaments. Most Valuable Player will be presented at all age levels.

## **FAN CODE OF CONDUCT**

Diamond Nation is committed to serving our fans by providing a secure, comfortable, and enjoyable experience for all fans at all of our venues. The Fan Code of Conduct has been instituted to make sure that your experience is consistent with our commitment.

As a supporter of the Diamond Nation Baseball and Softball Programs, we ask you to help us maintain a positive game day experience by adhering to the following:

- Fans will be treated in a consistent, professional and polite way by all staff and team personnel.

- Obscene, abusive, and/or racist language, gestures, signage or behavior directed towards game officials or visiting team's fans, players or coaching staff is prohibited. Additionally, obscene or indecent clothing or related material will not be admitted into any venue.
- Verbal or physical confrontation, including dangerous, abusive or profane behavior is prohibited.
- Disruptive actions or behavior that is unruly, disruptive, or illegal, including but not limited to throwing objects on the playing surface or unauthorized trespassing on the playing surface or other restricted areas will result in immediate removal from the event.
- Signs of alcohol impairment in and around any venue that results in irresponsible behavior will lead to denial of entry or subject persons to arrest or ejection from the event.
- Interfering with or failure to abide by security procedures, emergency procedures or requests from staff concerning athletic operations will result in immediate removal from the event.

Fans unwilling to abide by the provisions outlined in this Fan Code of Conduct will be subject to ejection and may also be subject to arrest and prosecution.

## PAYMENT & REFUND POLICY

### PAYMENT POLICY

Diamond Nation LLC requires any team registering for a tournament to make a non-refundable deposit payment. Registration for all events is limited. Payment in full for all events is due 30 days prior to the start of the event. Your final payment will be automatically billed to the method of payment used for your deposit. See registration pages for specific details.

Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover are accepted online and by phone. Checks can be sent to Diamond Nation LLC, 129 River Road, Flemington, NJ 08822.

### REFUND POLICY

Diamond Nation LLC requires all requests for refunds to be made in writing 30 days prior to the start of the event. Please see our refund policy on our website for further details.

### TOURNAMENT CANCELLATION POLICY (TEAMS)

A non-refundable deposit is due upon registration. Any cancellations made by the team or its representatives will result in the loss of this deposit. There will be absolutely no refunds for cancellations within 30 days of the tournament start date. Final payment is due 30 days prior to the start of the tournament. Coaches who are on the waiting list for a tournament will be contacted if a slot has opened. We encourage waiting list teams to provide a credit card number on their registration form to speed up the process should a slot open.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

If rain comes into play, we will do everything we can do to stay close to the original game schedule. The A-TURF fields will limit rain outs and delays. If we need to change the schedule because of the inclement weather, we will do our best to try to maintain the original tournament format schedule. All rain out games may not be made up depending on time constraints.

*In case of scheduling changes it is the team's responsibility, not the tournament committee, to make sure they are aware of the new schedule or any scheduling changes. This information will be posted at the complex when it becomes available as well as on our website.*

### TOURNAMENT CEASED/CANCELLED DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL

Not often there are circumstances beyond our control that inhibit us from playing. Examples include, but are not limited to, national disasters, shutdowns instituted by government officials, power outages, etc...If the tournament is cancelled at least 30 days prior to the start date then a full refund or credit can be given. If the tournament is cancelled within 30 days of the start date or play is stopped during the event, then please refer to the credit index below.

**Weather Hotline- 908-284-1778 ext.150**

## REFUND POLICY- Weather Related

### 3 game minimum tournaments

Play 0 Games- 100% credit (no refund)

Play 1 game –70% credit (no refund)

Play 2 games – \$100 credit only (no refund)

### 4 game minimum tournaments

Play 0 games- 100% credit (no refund)

Play 1 game –70% credit (no refund)

Play 2 games – 50% credit (no refund)

Play 3 games – \$100 credit only (no refund)

# DIAMOND NATION SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT PLAYING RULES

**Coaches:** Be sure you are aware of all rules and rule changes. Diamond Nation reserves the right to amend these rules at any time for specific tournament play. National Federation High School Softball Rules will be enforced with the following exceptions.

## ROSTER RULES & LINE UP

- Free defensive substitutions are allowed and you are allowed to bat your entire line up on both Saturday and Sunday.
  - With your batting line up, how you start the game is how you need to finish the game. If a player is unable to bat in their spot of the lineup and you do not have subs, it will be recorded as an out.
- Shorthanded Play: All games must be started with at least 8 players. If a team does not have at least 8 players at the start of the game then the result is a forfeit. If a team starts with 8 players then an automatic out will be called every time the 9<sup>th</sup> slot in the batting lineup comes up. If and when a 9<sup>th</sup> player arrives at any time during the game, that player is to be inserted immediately into the lineup in the 9<sup>th</sup> spot and placed into the game (even if the team is on defense). Any other player(s) that arrive after the 9<sup>th</sup> player can only be used as a legal substitute. The tournament director will determine if a start time can be delayed from its original time. NOTE: All teams should be prepared to start their game 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.
- Please announce offensive substitutions to the umpire and other team

## INNINGS

- 10u will play 6 innings. 12u-18u will play 7 innings.

## TIME LIMIT

- All games will have a 75-minute time limit, finish the inning. At 75 minutes no new inning will be allowed to start.
  - All non-playoff games that are tied after 6/7 innings or the time limit will be recorded as a tie. No extra innings will be played in non-playoff games even if it is under the time limit after 6/7 innings.
  - We will not finish an inning if the home team is winning & batting when time expires
  - Game time begins at the break of ground rules.
  - The official clock will only stop during lengthy delays (determined at umpire's discretion)

## SPEED UP RULES

- Pitchers will receive 5 warm ups the first inning, 3 every inning thereafter. A new pitcher will receive 5 warm ups.
- Infield/Outfield balls ARE permitted in between innings
- "Run Rule" as follows will be in place for ALL games (including Championship):
  - 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, and 8 runs after 5 innings
- **International Tie Breaker (ITB):** The last batter from the previous inning goes to 1<sup>st</sup> base, second to last batter at 2<sup>nd</sup> base, third to last batter at 3<sup>rd</sup> base. The hitting team will start with one out. Play continues this way until one team is ahead at the end of a full inning.
  - In Pool Play games there is no ITB.
  - In Elimination Round games, ITB will begin after time limit has expired or 6/7 innings have been played (whichever comes first).

## DETERMINING HOME TEAM

- In non-playoff games the home team and visiting team are pre-determined on the tournament schedule.
- In playoffs the better seed will be home team.

## COURTESY RUNNER

A courtesy runner (CR) can be used for the pitcher and/or the catcher at any time.

The same runner may not be used for both. *Players not in the game must be used as runners, but if a team has none the last batted out may be used.*

## REPORTING SCORES

Umpires will report the final score to the tournament booth. They will be the official score reporter. It is both the winning and losing team's responsibility to make sure they all have the same score.

## PITCHING DISTANCES

**10U:** 35ft • **12U:** 40ft • **14-18U:** 43ft

## DROPPED 3RD STRIKE AND INFIELD FLY

- Drop 3<sup>rd</sup> strike and infield fly is in effect for ALL ages

## EQUIPMENT

Jewelry must be removed with the exception of a medical alert bracelet.

## TECHNOLOGY

Electronic devices may be used by all positions and coaches for the purpose of relaying information and pitch calling. Electronic devices cannot be used for sign-stealing. Any player or coach caught using electronic devices to steal signs will be automatically ejected.

## AGE ELIGIBILITY

\*If you have questions about age eligibility, please contact Marty Clark [mclark@diamondnation.com](mailto:mclark@diamondnation.com)

### FALL 2023 - SUMMER 2024

BIRTH YEAR	U18 ELIGIBLE	U16 ELIGIBLE	U14 ELIGIBLE	U12 ELIGIBLE	U10 ELIGIBLE
2005	X				
2006	X				
2007	X	X			
2008	X	X			
2009	X	X	X		
2010	X	X	X		
2011	X	X	X	X	
2012	X	X	X	X	
2013	X	X	X	X	X

## FALL 2024 - SUMMER 2025

BIRTH YEAR	U18 ELIGIBLE	U16 ELIGIBLE	U14 ELIGIBLE	U12 ELIGIBLE	U10 ELIGIBLE
2006	X				
2007	X				
2008	X	X			
2009	X	X			
2010	X	X	X		
2011	X	X	X		
2012	X	X	X	X	
2013	X	X	X	X	
2014	X	X	X	X	X

***\*\*Please note that any player that has graduated high school in 2023 is NOT eligible to participate in our tournaments***

### AGE ELIGIBILITY PROTEST

Protests will be heard and ruled on by the tournament committee. The team protesting must have convincing evidence that a player is not in compliance. If the tournament committee feels there is convincing evidence, then they will proceed to the team-in-question's submitted roster. From here three cases can occur:

1. The player's information on the roster is in compliance with the tournament and therefore play continues.
2. The player's information is not in compliance to the tournament which results in team expulsion for the current tournament and the possibility of future tournaments. If the tournament is still in pool play, the standings will be recalculated and advancement procedures will remain the same. If the tournament is in the playoffs, the current game will become a forfeit and playoffs will continue as scheduled.
3. The player's information on the roster is in compliance with the tournament but the protesting team has convincing evidence that the wrong information was submitted. In this case, the protesting team must provide \$250 in cash which will be needed in order to gather the player-in-question's appropriate documents. From there, the player-in-question has until the end of the current game to provide the tournament committee his/her documents. If he/she cannot provide documents in that amount of time, then the tournament committee will make the fairest possible ruling and that ruling will be final.

### PLAYOFF SEEDINGS

1. Overall record (winning percentage)
2. If still tied: Total runs allowed in pool play
3. If still tied: Total runs scored in pool play
4. If still tied: Highest single game run differential
5. If still tied: Lowest single game runs allowed
6. If still tied: Highest single game runs scored
7. If still tied: Coin flip

\*If there is a case where all teams have not played the same amount of pool play games then we will base best overall record off of their winning percentage. If multiple teams have 100% winning percentage but a different number of wins than the team with the most wins will be presumed a better seed than the other team. For example: 3-0 is presumed better than 2-0.

\*If, at any time, a team informs the tournament director that they do not have intentions on playing in the playoffs, that team will be immediately removed from advancement procedures and the remaining teams will proceed with the regular tie-break rules.

## PLAYING RULES OR ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT PROTEST

Protests will be heard and ruled on by the tournament committee. The team protesting a playing rule must make cash payment of \$250 at the time of the protest to the tournament director on-site. If the protest is ruled in the protesting team's favor the \$250 will be refunded. The ruling made by the committee will be final. Protests must be filed and ruled on immediately. You cannot protest a play on the field if play has already been resumed. If you are protesting illegal equipment and committee rules in your favor, then the equipment in question will be removed immediately and play will continue (any prior game play leading up to that point remains as it was).

## SUSPENSION

Any player or coach that is ejected from a game will be subject to suspension upon review by the tournament committee. If a team acts unruly or unsportsmanlike, Diamond Nation reserves the right to eject that team from the current tournament and possibly ban that team from the facility for a certain length of time. Sportsmanship: In the interest of maintaining a quality event, the tournament committee reserves the right to eject any person from the site for unruly or unsportsmanlike behavior.

## THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

Reserves the right to adjust the rules, schedules, brackets, and field locations as needed to complete the tournament. Every attempt will be made to honor the game minimum – however, if a situation develops where a team forfeits or the weather does not cooperate the Tournament Director will make an attempt to reschedule games, shorten games, or cancel games in order to complete the tournament in a timely fashion.

## DIAMOND NATION FIELD GROUND RULES

1. If a ball becomes lodged in the padding or goes on top of the padding and is resting on the netting the ball becomes dead immediately and runners will be placed accordingly.
2. Any ball that goes into the dugout area is a dead ball and runners will be placed accordingly.
3. If a ball hits the protective netting or the facing of the blocks or the blue trim on top of the dugout area and the ball does not enter the dugout then the ball remains a live ball.
4. All gates must be closed at all times. If for some reason a gate is open and the ball passes the opening then that ball is considered dead immediately and runners will be placed accordingly.
5. Any ball hit over the yellow cap on the outfield fence is a homerun. Any ball bouncing off the turf and over the yellow cap is considered a ground rule double. No balls can be played off of the netting above outfield fences in fair territory.
6. Any fair ball that caroms into foul territory is a live ball unless the ball gets lodged in netting, padding, or fencing. In the case of a lodged ball, the ball becomes dead immediately and the runners will be placed accordingly.
7. Teams are allowed one on deck batter outside of their dugout at the end farthest away from home plate.
8. Batting order and designated head coach will be discussed at the pre-game conference
9. If portable fences are being utilized: a ball that rolls under the fence or crosses the left field or right field imaginary line (which extends the fence) will be ruled a ground rule double.
10. Home plate umpire will announce the starting time or start his stopwatch at the end of the pre-game conference.
11. No metal cleats unless given permission by the umpires. Sneaker, turf shoes, or molded cleats are okay for use.