



SOFTBALL NEW ZEALAND TOURNAMENT MANUAL

AS OF 5 AUGUST 2025

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CHAPTER 1 - TOURNAMENTS GENERAL

Section 1 - General

- **1001.** Softball New Zealand (SNZ) has a responsibility to ensure that all softball participants in New Zealand are provided with the opportunity to participate and maximize their potential within the sport of softball.
- **1002.** Whilst participation at the grass roots level of the game is reliant on both club and provincial level administrators, SNZ will endeavor to ensure that opportunities to participate at national level tournaments or competitions are provided. To do this SNZ will sanction and provide support for a series of senior and age grade tournaments and fixtures each playing season.
- **1003.** Prior to each playing season SNZ will publish a confirmed calendar of events, that will confirm tournament dates and locations for the full playing season. To then coincide with this calendar of events SNZ will distribute a confirmed timeline of activities or requirements that must be completed as part of the national tournament conduct.
- **1004.** Tournament host associations will be given maximum autonomy in the planning and conduct of national tournaments; however, specific planning and management criteria will be imposed by SNZ to meet legislative or compulsory requirements.
- **1005.** SNZ, through the Events and Operations Manager, and Chief Executive Officer, will have overall governance of National Tournaments and will report to the SNZ Executive on National Tournaments pertaining to SNZ's annual plan. To assist SNZ with the administration, management and continuing development of National Tournaments, a SNZ Tournament Advisory Group (TAG) will be established. This group (TAG) will meet on an 'as required' basis under the request of the SNZ Events and Associations Relationship Manager. An overview of the SNZ TAG's general roles of responsibilities is included as section 8 to this chapter.
- **1006.** Managers meetings should be held no earlier than 8pm on the day prior to the tournament. Associations should ensure that their coaches and managers are aware of this fee. If a team is unable to attend in person due to travel delays, they may have a representative attend on their behalf. The representative can only represent one team.

CHAPTER 1 - TOURNAMENTS GENERAL

Section 2 - Eligibility

- **1010.** All provincial softball associations affiliated to Softball New Zealand are eligible to compete in national tournaments under the jurisdiction of SNZ. Admission to each tournament shall be forwarded through the association (*or club, for open clubs' tournaments*) to SNZ by either **(i)** The online registration form, or **(ii)** the applicable entry forms from the SNZ Tournament Documentation page;

- Association team entry forms
- NZ Open Clubs Entry Form

- **1011. Sub Association.** Where a genuine sub-association exists, comprising of at least four separate club teams, then, at the discretion of SNZ and the provincial association a sub-association team may be permitted to participate in Inter Association Tournaments.

- **1012. Regional Selections:**

For the national age-grade tournaments, Auckland, Canterbury, Hutt Valley, North Harbour and Wellington Associations are not allowed pick up players of any sort, they can only have players affiliated to their own respective association.

Players whose Association enters or does not enter a team in a National Tournament are eligible to be selected by another association (*except Auckland, Canterbury, Hutt Valley, North Harbour and Wellington*) within their region, as defined below:

1. Auckland.
2. Northland, North Harbour
3. Franklin, Counties Manukau, Waikato, Rotorua and Western Bay of Plenty.
4. Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū, Horowhenua, Hawkes Bay and Tairāwhiti.
5. Wellington and Hutt Valley.
6. Canterbury.
7. Nelson, Marlborough, South Canterbury, Mainland, Central Otago, Otago and Southland.

Any two or more provinces (*excluding Auckland, Canterbury, Hutt Valley, North Harbour and Wellington*) within the regions category above may combine for the purposes of creating one team to enter a National Championship. A combined team can incorporate in its name all the names of the provinces making up the combined team and will be recognised as a combined joint team entry from all associations making up the combination. For clarity, players from the provinces making up the combined team are not classified as pick up players.

To encourage combined team entries, Regions 3, 4 & 7 may be overlapped.

Note: Students transferring back to their Home Association's at the end of the term are eligible to play, in that season, for the Association where they were studying if not selected by their Home Association's Representative Team.



- **1013. Eligibility.** Teams competing in the following National Tournaments shall fulfill the following requirements as listed:

AGE GRADE TOURNAMENTS.

One team from each Association (*or combination Associations*) shall be eligible to participate in each Tournament except where authority is obtained from Softball New Zealand. A second team at Age Grade championships is encouraged from associations however must be selected on a genuine A and B team basis. If there is an A & B team then only the B team is allowed pick up players. For the age grade tournaments, only a maximum of two International players will be allowed on the roster to play.

Note: No player shall play for any association in any tournament or fixture unless that player meets the following criteria **at least 28 days prior** to the commencement of the event:

- The player is affiliated to the specific association.
- The player has completed any Inter-Association clearance.
- The player has completed any WBSC Athlete Transfers

OPEN CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS.

One team from each Premier Club (*playing in the top division/grade within their association competition*) shall be eligible to participate in this tournament. Clubs that are DEFUNCT or UNFINANCIAL cannot participate.

Note: No player shall play in this tournament unless they meet these criteria:

1. They must have completed any Club/Association clearance or transfer and must be registered to that club **as of 31 December of the current season.**
2. The player must have **played a minimum of seven (7) premier club games** (*tournaments do not count*) between the date the player registered for their club and the start day of the tournament. If seven premier club games have not been completed, then the player will not be eligible to play in the open clubs' tournament. NOTE: A Premier Club game is defined as games played in the **top 2 grades/divisions within an Associations competition.**

Players in other grades/divisions within a club in an association's local competition that have played in at least 60% of the games in their registered grade/division before the start of the tournament are eligible to play. **These players can only play for their club.**

All participating clubs shall be allowed a **MAXIMUM OF TWO** "pick up" players from any association. The pick-up players must have played a minimum of seven (7) premier club games [*tournaments do not count*] between the date the player registered for their club and the start day of the tournament. If seven premier club games have not been completed, then the player will not be eligible to play in the open clubs' tournament. Again, the player needs to be registered to that club as at 31 December of the current season.

Teams competing at the Open Clubs are only allowed to have up to three (3) international players on their full team roster. Players who have NZ citizenship and permanent residency are not classed as overseas players.



Associations with club teams (*other than Auckland, Canterbury, Hutt Valley, North Harbour and Wellington*) can have two pickups as above, plus up to four additional pickups from within their own region (*as listed on page 4*).

- Such players must (i) have been eligible to play for their own Club under these rules, and (ii) in the first instance be available for selection for the Club that they are registered with.
- Players whose registered club is DEFUNCT or UNFINANCIAL are not eligible to be considered as "pick-up" players.

NATIONAL FASTPITCH CHAMPIONSHIPS

Only one (1) international player can participate in each Association. The overseas player must have played a **minimum of 3 premier club games** (*Top 2 divisions within a local association competition*) over a **minimum of two (2) weekends** within the season (*tournaments do not count*) before the start day of the Tournament.

One team from each Association (or combination Associations) shall be eligible to participate in the NFC. A second team is encouraged from associations however must be selected on a genuine A and B team basis.

Note: No player shall play for any association in any tournament or fixture unless that player meets the following criteria **at least 28 days prior** to the commencement of the event:

- The player is affiliated to the specific association.
- The player has completed any Inter-Association clearance.
- The player has completed any WBSC Athlete Transfers

New Zealand Players who wish to play in the tournament who are based overseas and who are not affiliated to a NZ association, can register to play for the association they were registered with before they left to be based overseas.

Any two or more provinces (*excluding Auckland, Canterbury, Hutt Valley, North Harbour and Wellington*) within the regions category above may combine for the purposes of creating one team to enter the NFC. A combined team can incorporate in its name all the names of the provinces making up the combined team, or have a separate name representing the combined teams. For clarity, players from the provinces making up the combined team are not classified as pick up players.

- **1014. Overall Exemption.** In order to provide the best competition possible, SNZ reserves the right to allow exceptions to the aforementioned rules. This will only be done under exceptional circumstances and any decision to give a dispensation will be considered and approved by the Tournament Dispensation Committee. All decisions will be based on the proviso that no one team or association gains an unfair advantage and what is generally considered to be in the best interest of the game.



• 1015. Pick Up Rules.

For Age Grade Tournaments and NFC, Associations may pick up a total of four (4) players from anywhere in the country, provided that their registered association does not require them. Auckland, Canterbury, Hutt Valley, North Harbour and Wellington are excluded from this pick-up rule and must select players affiliated to their own respective association.

Players may be eligible as regional pick-ups for regional teams even though their association has entered the respective tournament (*This means teams can use unlimited regional pick-ups from their own region – see Page 4 for regions*). Players from Auckland, Canterbury, Hutt Valley, North Harbour and Wellington cannot be picked up as regional pick-ups for the smaller associations.

- The player must, in the first instance, be available for selection for the association or association regional team they are registered with.
- Players not listed on their association's lodged return schedule by the due date for the applicable tournament are granted automatic and irrevocable release for the period of the tournament.
- It is compulsory for the parent association to be notified of all pick up players.
- **Please note:** Where requests for pick-ups involve age group players playing at tournaments above their own age group, the player's home association has the right to decline an application for pick up if it is considered to be in the player's best interest.

• 1016. Loan Players.

All eligibility outlined in 1013. (*Page 5*) apply to Loan Players.

Inter-Association Loan Players must compete for their registered association at representative grade for National Tournaments. Should their registered association not field a representative team, they are then able to compete as a pick-up player.

For Open Club National Tournaments, Loan Players are required to meet the same eligibility as other team members. The player must have played a **minimum of seven (7) premier club games** [*tournaments do not count*] for that team between the date the player registered as a Loan Player and the start day of the Club Nationals tournament. If seven premier club games have not been completed for their loan club, then the player would be deemed a pick-up player, and must adhere to the pick-up rules outlines in 1012 (*above*).

NOTE: A Premier Club game is defined as games played in the top 2 grades/divisions within an Associations competition. Loan Players that have played in at least 60% of the games in their registered grade/division before the start of the tournament are eligible to **play for registered their club only** if not having completed seven games minimum for their loan club.

• 1017. International Tournament Entries

Entries from clubs or teams from overseas may be accepted and may compete and progress to all levels of the Open Club Tournament, including the final. Even if winning this, however, they cannot be named the New Zealand Championship Team. This title will go to the highest placing New Zealand Club Team. The overseas team, and individuals, are eligible to win all other awards.

Offshore entries to Age Grade tournaments and National Fastpitch Championships (NFC) are not eligible for individual awards or tournament team selection, and the team cannot progress to the finals.



• 1018. Official Tournament Forms

A copy of Softball New Zealand's official forms can be found on the [Tournament Documentation page](#) of the SNZ website. This includes;

- Pick-Up Player Forms
- Inter-Association Transfer Form
- Inter-Association Loan Player Form
- Tournament Entry Forms

• 1019. International Athlete Definition

An athlete will be classified as an International Athlete (Import) if they:

- Do not hold New Zealand residency, citizenship, and/or an NZ passport; *and*
- Have been residing in New Zealand for less than three (3) consecutive years; *and/or*
- Are registered under a WBSC International Athlete Transfer (ITC)
- Have not gained reclassification from Softball New Zealand on International status

This definition seeks to distinguish between short-term seasonal athletes and those who have made a sustained commitment to New Zealand life, culture and the domestic softball community. Athletes who have resided permanently in New Zealand for three (3) or more **consecutive** years (*prior to the start of the season*) will no longer be considered international athletes. Short-term or seasonal players (*e.g., those who travel to New Zealand only during the summer and return overseas in the off-season*) will continue to be classified as international imports regardless of cumulative time spent in the country.

Athletes seeking reclassification must apply through their local association - to ensure their knowledge and approval - before being forwarded to Softball New Zealand, providing documented evidence of their continuous residency and integration within the community.

Acceptable documentation may include (*but is not limited to*):

- Visa or immigration status documentation (*including current applications*)
- Employment contracts from New Zealand based employers
- Enrolment confirmations or academic transcripts from NZ education providers
- Community involvement and/or club participation records

Once approved, the athlete's reclassification is permanent and will remain in effect unless exceptional circumstances require a review. All applications to Softball New Zealand for reclassification will be made available to all associations to ensure transparency and consistency across the country, similar to the process for International Athlete Transfers.

CHAPTER 1 - TOURNAMENTS GENERAL

Section 3 - Attendance

- **1021.** The coordination of attendance at all National Tournaments, in terms of travel, accommodation and food is the responsibility of the individual association or club. SNZ supports National Tournaments by funding various generic aspects of each tournament.
- **1022. The procedure for entering** National Tournaments is as follows:
 - SNZ will provide a yearly schedule of events with confirmed dates and venue for all National Tournaments; this will be completed no later than the end of May.
 - SNZ will set specific cut off dates for entry into all National Tournaments no later than the end of August each year.
 - Association entry into National Tournaments will be completed using either (i) the official Tournament Entry Form, or (ii) the online registration form.
 - Entry into all National Tournaments, less Open Clubs, will be required at this time with one generic form being used for all Association entries. Downloadable versions of the various entry forms are on the SNZ web site.
 - Payment of tournament entry fees will be required to accompany the official entry form. Tournament entry fees will be set by SNZ and the exact cost will be included on the Tournament Entry Form. Any team whose Association has not paid the appropriate entry fee by the due date shall be automatically excluded from the tournament.
 - Entry into the Open Clubs Tournament will be coordinated by individual clubs, using the Official Entry Form found on the Softball New Zealand website. Once again, entry fees are to accompany entry forms.
- **1023. Return Schedules.**

Return schedules covering such details as names, positions and shirt numbers of players, names and duties of officials, together with the address and contact phone numbers of the team manager etc. shall be forwarded to SNZ for all National Tournaments.

The date for submission of return schedules will be set by SNZ each year, generally it will be **2-4 weeks** prior to the commencement of the tournament. These return schedules, signed by the competing association's secretary shall be used in the furnishing of complete details to the host association. Failure to submit return schedules by the due date given by SNZ may result in a financial **penalty of \$75**. A copy of the SNZ official return schedule form can be downloaded from the SNZ web site from the 'Tournament Documentation' page.
- **1024. Team Withdrawal.**

The withdrawal of teams subsequent to the date laid down for the submission of return schedules shall be penalised by a fine equal to the entry fee associated with the specific tournament. In essence, the association will forfeit the entry fee payment.

- **1025.** Any player whose **name is not entered on the return Schedule** for any tournament shall not participate in the said tournament. However, return schedules may be altered up to one hour before the team commences play in a tournament. Any such alteration must be advised to the SNZ Tournament Representative (STR) and the Tournament Organiser from the host association and must be approved by the association representative of the team in question. Full team lists with alterations shall be posted on the information board by the host association no later than 2.00pm on the first day of play.
- **1026.** Age grade players who do not have registration computer numbers, and who are listed on Tournament Return Schedules, will be required to provide proof of age before being eligible to play at any age grade tournament. Team Managers are required to provide physical verification of a player's age to the STR at the immediate conclusion of the Tournament Managers meeting. Certified digital and/or photocopies will be accepted by Softball New Zealand up to three (3) days prior to the event. This includes;
 - Players' birth certificate
 - Passport
 - Driver's license
 - A certified copy of the above

CHAPTER 1 - TOURNAMENTS GENERAL

Section 4 - Competition

- **1030. Competition Format**

The competition format for each National Tournament will be decided upon by Softball New Zealand, in consultation with the SNZ Tournament Advisory Group (TAG). Generally speaking, every effort will be made to accommodate a round robin type format with a finals series being conducted at the conclusion of the round robin. Where possible, every effort will be made to ensure that each team plays no less than one game per day and no more than three (3) games in any one day.

- **1031.** The exact competition format and the ability to play a full round robin is reliant on the number of entries received for each tournament and the time frame available. For most national tournaments nine teams or less will facilitate a full round robin and ten teams or more will facilitate a round robin in pools. The preferred finals series format will be the single- or double-page format, however, the opportunity to conduct this format is once again reliant on the number of tournament entries and the time frame available.

- **1032. Commitment to Play.**

All teams entered into SNZ national tournaments are required to play all fixtures allocated within the tournament draw. Failure by any association or club team to play a formal tournament fixture will incur a formal penalty as set by Softball New Zealand. Such penalties may include a monetary fine up to an amount equivalent to the entry fee, a stand down period of being able to enter into the tournament in future years, or a combination of both a monetary and stand down penalty.

- **1033. Alteration to the Draw.**

On occasion due to inclement weather or last-minute team withdrawals, there may be a requirement to make last minute changes to the tournament playing schedule/draw. Any such changes will be made by the STR, in consultation with Tournament Organiser and the Softball New Zealand Events and Operations Manager or Chief Executive Officer.

- **1034. Seedings.**

Tournament seedings will be based on placings from the previous season's tournament. If new teams are entered into tournaments (*teams not entered in the previous season*) they will be seeded in the lowest position. Individual host associations can request a change in seedings for club teams entered into senior open club tournaments, through SNZ.

CHAPTER 1 - TOURNAMENTS GENERAL

Section 5 - Annual Review

- **1040.** The purpose of the National Tournament Review is to discuss any rule changes or alterations to current procedures or practices that are in the best interests of all National Tournaments. The National Tournament Review is also held to seek input to the planning of the dates and venues for the following season's National Tournaments, and to identify improvements that will enhance and simplify the administration, management and operation of the National Tournaments.
- **1031.** Within a month of the seasons end (*last national tournament*) each association should supply in report format any constructive feedback they have regarding any of the tournaments. Any Coaches, Managers, Players or officials should provide any constructive feedback to the association to be included in this report.
- **1032.** One week after completion of the National Review, Minutes of that meeting will be electronically distributed to all Associations and review attendees. Softball New Zealand will request feedback, comment and suggestions within a specific time frame and will send confirmation of decisions made etc at the earliest possible time.

CHAPTER 1 - TOURNAMENTS GENERAL

Section 6 - Tied-Teams Formula

- **1050.** At all national tournaments where there is a tie for a championship, then such championship shall be decided by play-offs as necessary, except where time does not permit.

- **1051. Championship Playoffs.**

The tied-team formula is used only to find out who the New Zealand Tournament Champion is:

- If two teams tie, the playoff is a simple one game.
- If three teams tie, use the Tied Team Formula (below) to find the top team of the three, who will play against the winner of the game between the other two teams to find the NZ champion team.
- If four teams tie, a straight knockout round semi-final type draw is used, e.g. 1 v 4 and 2 v 3. These seedings are found using the tied team formula.

Should time permit the playing of one game only, this game will be between the top two seeded teams as a straight final (*placed by use of the tied team formula*). Where time or weather do not permit a play off for the championship, the round robin results may be used to determine the champion team: If round robin not completed and tied teams have played each other the formula as per para 1052 (a) to separate two tied teams or para 1052 (b) to separate three or more teams is to be used. If round robin not completed and tied teams have not played each other the use of results from an equal number of completed games is used to apply the tied team formula 1052 (b ii and iii).

Play-offs for all places, except NZ championship for promotion, relegation and grading purposes shall be decided by the tied team formula.

- **1052. Tied-Team Formula.**

If two teams tie the result of the LAST game played between the two teams will have the game winner placed above the game loser (*who beat who*).

If three or more teams tie for any position and cannot be graded by the who beat who method, then the following formula is to be used in determining placings: i.e. if one has not beaten all others.

1. Calculate the run ratio of games played between the tied teams, grading them from highest to lowest.
2. Where teams are able to be separated and ranked using the above formula that ranking holds. For teams still tied after using the above run ratio formula the second run ratio formula using the runs scored in all games during the round robin by the tied teams is to be applied.
3. If three or more teams still have the same ratio, they are to be ranked on order of the total runs each team scored during the round robin.

- **1053. Run Ratio.**

The run ratio (*runs for divided by the runs against*), is calculated on the runs scored at the last completed even innings, except that if a team batting second wins the game in a partly completed innings (*one run*) that innings may be counted.

- **1054. Responsibility.**

The Tournament Organiser, STR and Chief Scorer are responsible for any decision necessary to place tied teams.



CHAPTER 1 - TOURNAMENTS GENERAL

Section 7 - Hosting National Tournaments

- **1061.** SNZ National Tournaments can be hosted at various venues throughout New Zealand, providing that SNZ has approved each venue as being suitable and capable of hosting such tournaments. The overall allocation of tournament venues will be approved by SNZ after consultation with all parties concerned (*Chief Officials, Associations etc*).
- **1062.** The allocation of venues for national tournaments will be confirmed after the annual tournaments review each year. Generally speaking, the tournament review will be held within one month of completion of the National Tournaments comments regarding the tournament schedule and venues will be required one month after the review, with a final confirmed schedule and venue allocation being publicised by the end of that month each year. SNZ aim to have a minimum of two-years' worth of allocations available at any one time, which will be visible on the National Events Calendar on the SNZ website.
- **1063.** SNZ has a desire to ensure that the game of softball is promoted on a national basis and that smaller provincial centers are given the opportunity to host national tournaments. However, there is also a requirement that the financial costs imposed on SNZ and attending teams is taken into account.
- **1064.** In essence a proposed schedule and venue allocation **two years in advance** will be provided. A further year in advance will also be included in terms of the region (*Northern Region, Central Region and Southern Region*) that it is desired that the various tournaments will be hosted in. In essence a regional allocation will be made three years in advance. The Associations within each regional area are:
 - **Northern:** Auckland, North Harbour, Counties, Franklin, Waikato, WBOP and Whanganui.
 - **Central:** All other North Island Associations.
 - **Southern:** All South Island Associations.
- **1065. The process for the allocation of national tournaments is:**

Once the regional allocation has been made on an annual rotation between the three regions, Associations within each region will be required to submit an expression of interest to host a specific tournament. Once expressions of interest have been received by SNZ, a more formal indication of SNZ expectations will be communicated between interested parties which will include a Tournament Hosting Manual outlining the requirements for each event. This will provide intending host associations the opportunity to clarify levels of support required and expected. Final confirmation of tournament venues will then be published by SNZ.
- **1066.** Once Associations have agreed to host a national tournament, a formal contract between the host association and SNZ will be signed off and agreed to by both parties.

