



## 2026 ARMED FORCES MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

1. **COMPETITION RULES**. Current USA Softball Rules for Men's B competition and Women's Open Division, as amended by the Armed Forces Sports Council (AFSC). Home run rule shall comply with current USA Softball Rules.
2. **GAME BALL**. Per current USA Softball Rules for both men and women. Balls must adhere to USA Softball specifications (compression and CORE). Hosting Service shall publish the most current ball-type within the Letter of Instruction (LOI) at least 60 days prior to the championship.
3. **TOURNAMENT FORMAT**. Triple round-robin play for seeding followed by single elimination bracket.
4. **DRAW**: As determined by established annual draw.
5. **FINAL TEAM STANDINGS**. Based on results of single elimination bracket.
6. **TIE-BREAKER POLICY**. The following procedures, in order, will be used to break any ties at the conclusion of round-robin play:
  - a. Head-to-Head record.
  - b. Run for/against differential of the games played between the tied teams.
  - c. Run for/against differential of all games played by tied teams.
7. **FACILITY, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL**.
  - a. Field IAW current USA Softball Rules.
  - b. Dugout.
    - 1) All players, except for the base coaches, batter, and on-deck batter, must remain in their assigned dugout. Unauthorized players caught in the field of play will result in the active batter called out. If defensive team substitute players are caught in the field of play, the first batter will be called out.
    - 2) Only official roster team members are authorized in the dugout.
    - 3) Music is not authorized in or around the dugout and the competition venue. Authorized music may only be provided by the host site organizers. Service representatives have the authority to shut off all music at the competition venue.
  - c. Playing Area.
    - 1) When the player enters the playing area (actual field of play, not including dugout) with a non-approved bat/warm-up device (any bat/device not stamped approved by the USA Softball Umpires onsite), the player shall be ejected from the game and all games remaining in

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tournament. Team bats may be used for infield prior to the game but must be removed from the field of play prior to the first pitch. All bats will remain on the field of play.

d. Equipment.

1) Shoes with metal cleats are prohibited.

2) Bats must adhere to IAW USA Softball specifications. Participants can bring and use their own bats if they pass the USA Softball bat test. The host Service must have a USA Softball bat tester on site. All bats will be inspected and tested by the UIC. If the bat passes, a tamper proof sticker will be placed on it. Officials reserve the right to retest any bat at any time during the tournament. Teams must coordinate with the UIC for additional testing if replacement bats are required.

e. Uniforms. All players shall wear the same competitive uniform, which may include either shorts or pants. Teams may elect to wear shorts or pants, but all players shall be uniform (all shorts or all pants).

f. Host Project Officer shall obtain experienced scorers and statisticians through the local official's association/sources. Local rates will be paid by hosting Service to these individuals.

g. Reserve Players

1) Reserve players are only eligible to play should a member of the 15-player roster become injured.

2) Should a player become injured the player may be replaced from the approved reserve player pool, provided the injury is certified by the team's medical staff.

3) Injured players that are replaced by reserve players are not eligible to return to competition in the event their condition improves.

4) Reserve players are not permitted in the team bench area unless they are also officially designated as a staff member on official roster. Staff members include Head coach, Assistant Coach, OIC, and Ad libitum. Medical personnel cannot be designated as reserve players.

5) All reserve players are required to have a uniform with a unique number not duplicated by any other athlete.

h. If a player is ejected from the tournament, that player is ineligible for the remaining matches of the championship and the overall roster is reduced by one. This player is now a non-participant, cannot remain on the sidelines, and will not be considered for the All-Tournament Team.

i. Media personnel are not authorized in the field of play unless directed by the Armed Forces Sports staff during approved breaks.

**8. PROTESTS.** Protests on rules or eligibility are handled by the protest committee. The protest committee consisting of Service representatives and Chief of Officials will only accept protests when they are submitted in accordance with USA Softball rules. Protests must be resolved before a contest can continue.

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9. **OFFICIATING PROBLEMS.** Incidents or issues related to an official at an event will be addressed with the head official immediately. If not addressed immediately, Services should inform the AFSCS about problems occurred with official(s) within 30 days after the conclusion of the championship.

10. **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS.** The host Service will determine game times. Established times must be consistent each day and must be set to draw maximum fan participation.

- a. Day One      Teams Arrive (Travel Day)  
Team Practice Sessions
- b. Day Two:      Team Practice Sessions  
Organizational Meeting  
Informal Icebreaker  
Team Photos
- c. Day Three:      Opening Ceremony (Optional) - However, all Service flags to include the Space Force and Coast Guard flags shall be displayed or posted with colors. If all Service flags are not available, then only the American flag and host Service flag shall be displayed.  
  
(Home team on the right)  
Game 1      USAF vs Navy (W)  
Game 2      USAF vs Navy (M)  
Game 3      Army vs USAF (W)  
Game 4      Army vs USAF (M)  
Game 5      Navy vs Army (W)  
Game 6      Navy vs Army (M)
- d. Day Four:      Game 7      USAF vs Army (W)  
Game 8      USAF vs Army (M)  
Game 9      Army vs Navy (W)  
Game 10      Army vs Navy (M)  
Game 11      Navy vs USAF (W)  
Game 12      Navy vs USAF (M)
- e. Day Five:      Game 13      Navy vs Army (W)  
Game 14      Navy vs Army (M)  
Game 15      USAF vs Navy (W)  
Game 16      USAF vs Navy (M)  
Game 17      Army vs USAF (W)  
Game 18      Army vs USAF (M)
- g. Day Seven:      Single Elimination Bracket Begins  
  
Game 19      (M)      Seed 3 vs Seed 2  
Game 20      (W)      Seed 3 vs Seed 2

US Armed Forces Team Selection Committee immediately following Game 20.

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Game 21	(M)	Winner Game 19 vs Seed 1
Game 22	(W)	Winner Game 20 vs Seed 1

Awards Ceremony - (Immediately following the final game) Service teams will wear Service warm-ups or competitive uniforms at the awards ceremony. Individual athletes who do not comply will not receive awards or be selected to the Armed Forces team. If the Awards ceremony is conducted as a separate function in conjunction with the Ice Breaker Social, then all Service Members must with Ice-Breaker Dress Policy. Footwear shall be at the discretion of the attending Service Representatives.

h. Day Eight: Teams Depart (Travel Day)

11. ADVERSE WEATHER SCHEDULE. The schedule may be adjusted due to hot climates at various locations. Service representatives shall determine alternative solutions/schedules during adverse weather conditions.

### 12. AWARDS.

a. Individual: Each member of the winning and runner-up teams (to include the coaches, team trainer and OIC) receive individual awards.

b. Team: No team trophy is presented.

c. All-Tournament Team.

1. The All-tournament team is announced prior to the announcement of the 15 players selected to advance to higher-level competition. The Host Project Officer will select and purchase a special "All-Tournament" memento.

2. See selection process in paragraph (13) for All-Tournament Team selection procedures.

3. Women. The All-Tournament team is selected of four (4) infielders, four (4) outfielders, two (2) utility players, and one (1) pitcher.

4. Men. The All-Tournament team is selected of five (5) infielders, three (3) outfielders, two (2) utility players, and one (1) pitcher.

### 13. TEAM COMPOSITION - ARMED FORCES CHAMPIONSHIP.

Roster not to exceed 19 individuals:

15 Players

2 Reserve Players

1 Coach

1 Asst Coach

1 Certified Athletic Trainer/Physician\*

1 ad libitum

1 OIC

TOTAL: 22

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\* Medical personnel listed on roster must be trained medical providers and properly certified/licensed. Teams are not authorized to substitute for this position with an additional coach, statistician, or reserve player. Personnel failing to provide appropriate credentials (if challenged) shall be deemed unauthorized and removed from the bench.

Note: Rosters must be submitted NLT four days prior to championship report date. Only the above personnel (not including reserve players) are authorized in the designated bench areas.

### 14. SELECTION PROCESS - HIGHER LEVEL AND ALL-TOURNAMENT.

#### a. Athlete Selection Process.

1) The AFSWG members, or designated Service representatives, at the site of the Armed Forces Championship are responsible for the selection of the All-Tournament Team and the U.S. Armed Forces Team for higher-level competition.

a) The following positions are required at a minimum:

1) Women: Four (4) infielders, four (4) outfielders, two (2) utility players, and one (1) pitcher.

2) Men: Five (5) infielders, three (3) outfielders, two (2) utility players, and one (1) pitcher.

b) The remaining roster of infielders, outfielders, pitchers and utility players shall be determined based on roster of players and coaching formation/styles.

2) The host Service shall ensure all Higher Advancement forms (appendix c) have been completed and signed electronically to the Armed Forces Sports Office at the conclusion of the organization meeting. The host Service will provide Service representatives with a list of participants unavailable to advance to higher-level competition.

3) Service representatives and coaches are required to assess all athletes regardless of Service affiliation and select the most qualified athletes for the All-Tournament and U.S. Armed Forces Teams. Service representatives must ensure that all appropriate player positions are selected.

4) Service representatives are required to submit the All-Tournament Team and U.S. Armed Forces Team ballots electronically to the Armed Forces Sports representative on site (appendix E) the evening prior to the selection meeting, or as determined by the Armed Forces Sports representative.

5) Service Representatives, coaches, and any designated voting delegates may not vote for athletes from the Service they represent when submitting All-Tournament or Armed Forces Team ballots. Ballots containing votes for athletes from the voter's own Service will be considered invalid and returned for correction.

6) Athletes selected to the All-Tournament Team shall automatically be selected to the Armed Forces Team unless unavailable. The most competent athletes, regardless of Service

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affiliation, shall be selected to complete the final Armed Forces Team roster. Applicable exception is addressed in paragraph 8.d.(4).

7) The Armed Forces Sports Representative shall chair the selection meeting. If the Armed Forces Sports Representative is not in attendance, then the host Service shall chair the selection meeting.

8) The Armed Forces Sports Representative will compile the results of the ballots and present the results to the Service representatives at the start of the selection meeting. In the event of ties, the Armed Forces Sports Representative shall lead the Service representatives through objective discussions and conduct two re-votes on the tied individuals. The Armed Forces Sports Representative shall break the remaining tie(s).

9) Selection meeting attendance is limited to the Service Representative and the Service Head Coach. Each Service authorizes one spokesperson during the meeting.

10) All discussions within the meeting shall remain confidential. Selections of athletes shall be released at the designated awards ceremony.

11) When higher-level team sports competition does not immediately follow the Armed Forces championship and athletes withdraw from higher competition, the head coach may nominate replacement players of the specific positions vacated with AFSWG concurrence. Replacement players must have played at the Armed Forces Championship, have completed the Higher Advancement Form (appendix C), have necessary training completed for country/theater clearance, and have the required travel documents (passport/visa when applicable).

b. Coach Selection Policy: The Head Coach for the Armed Forces Team shall be the winning Head Coach of the Armed Forces Championship (subject to review by the Service Representatives at the Championship). This coach shall select his/her Assistant Coach from the pool of coaches that participated in the championship (subject to review by the Service Representatives at the championship). If the winning Head Coach is not available, then the second-place team Head Coach shall be the Head Coach of the Armed Forces team. This individual shall also select his/her Assistant Coach from the pool of coaches who participated in their respective Armed Forces Championship (subject to review by the Service Representatives at the Championship). If neither the winning nor the second place Head Coaches are available to advance to higher level competition, the AFSWG shall vote to select a Head Coach from the remaining pool of available coaches who participated in the championship. Priority shall be given to Head Coaches. If replacement coaches cannot be identified within 24 hours preceding the announcement of the team delegation, then the Armed Forces team shall not advance to higher level competition.

c. During the Athlete Selection Process, Service representatives shall reserve the right to not select top quality candidates based on behavior, grooming standards, or disciplinary reasons. The host Service will not make any additions or deletions to the selected Armed Forces Team without coordination and concurrence of the Working Group Members of the other three Services.

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### 15. TEAM COMPOSITION – NATIONALS.

15 Players

1 Coach

1 Asst Coach

1 Certified Athletic Trainer/Medical Provider\*

1 Team Captain

TOTALS: 19

*\* Medical personnel listed on roster must be trained medical providers and properly certified/licensed. Teams are not authorized to substitute for this position with an additional coach, statistician, or reserve player.*

### 16. FORMS AND ROSTERS.

a. All final rosters and code of conduct forms shall be submitted in accordance with the deadlines established in the LOI for each respective sport and shall be submitted electronically to the Armed Forces Sports representative. Failure to provide rosters will result in the Service disqualified from participating in the Armed Forces Championship.

b. All athletes and coaches shall complete and sign the Armed Forces Sports Higher Advancement Form (appendix C) electronically for consideration of selection to the Armed Forces Team. All Higher Advancement Forms must be submitted by the Officer in Charge of the respective Service at or before the organizational meeting at the Armed Forces Championship. Teams advancing to higher-level competitions shall not exceed the number of allocations specified for each sport per appendix (B). Failure to do so shall disqualify athletes from advancing to higher level competition.

c. All athletes, coaches and staff from each Service must sign the Armed Forces Sports Participant Code of Conduct (appendix D) in order to participate at the Armed Forces Championship and higher level competition. The Code of Conduct shall be submitted at the start of the Organizational Meeting, or electronically prior to the Organizational Meeting. If a training camp to higher level competition is conducted without the conduct of an Armed Forces Championship, then Team Captains shall have all participants sign the Code of Conduct immediately upon arrival and prior to any official activity. If an Armed Forces Championship or training camp is not conducted prior to, the Team Captain shall collect the Code of Conduct forms electronically prior to the delegation's departure to higher level competition. Failure to do so shall disqualify athletes from competing at the Armed Forces Championship and advancing to higher level competition.

d. Team Captains and Coaches shall sign their respective LOI (appendix G/I).

e. Athletes advancing to higher level competition must sign the anti-doping declaration form (appendix L), if applicable.

f. All forms are available on the Armed Forces Sports Website at:  
[www.armedforcessports.defense.gov](http://www.armedforcessports.defense.gov)

17. ALCOHOL POLICY. There will be no alcohol consumption at the sports venue by personnel involved in the Armed Forces Sports competition, higher level competition and CISM competition, including sports staff, until all competition for the day has been completed to include the award ceremony on the final day if the awards banquet immediately follows the event. The venue is

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defined as the playing area, venue parking lot, and the assigned eating/spectator area. This policy will not apply if the awards banquet or ceremony is conducted as a separate event. However, more restrictive installation policies regarding alcohol will take precedence. Violation of this policy shall result in immediate suspension from the remaining championship/event, disqualification from higher-level competition and selection to the All-Tournament Team and shall be subject to further administrative actions by the AFSWG.

18. **TOBACCO POLICY**. All competitors and staff shall refrain from the use of tobacco related products, including cigarettes, vaping, chewing tobacco, and other smokeless forms at the competition site. Use of these products shall comply with local installation policies and shall only occur in designated areas.

19. **ICEBREAKER SOCIAL**.

a. Ice-breaker social shall be conducted at all Armed Forces Championships. Food/beverages are optional depending on the availability of funding/authorizations. If the event is conducted outside of a military installation, then the ice-breaker social shall be optional.

b. Authorized team members must attend the event in their Service polo or logo shirt, coordinated slacks, and appropriate footwear (exceptions may be made dependent on host site letter of instruction). Guests may attend with pre-coordination with the host site and Service representative. Final decision will be based on availability. Guests will assume costs associated with attending the ice breaker.

c. The Ice-Breaker Social is an official function and shall be conducted in accordance with local installation policies and all participants are expected to conduct themselves in the highest professional manner. Informal activities such as skits, hazing and other activities that include offensive language/behavior are not authorized.

20. **HANDLING OF RULE VIOLATIONS**. If there is a violation of the SOP, code of conduct or specific sport rules, the AFS Representative or in their absence, the project officer, will address the respective Service Representative to resolve the issue. Service Representative will resolve the violation before the Service competes in the next game. All code of conduct violations shall be handled according to the Armed Forces SOP (Paragraph 8.b.(4)(f)).

21. **SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**.

a. All Armed Forces Sports shall comply with the safety procedures prescribed by USA Softball. Service Branches are encouraged to bring their own medical personnel with them to the competition.

b. Host Service shall ensure there is adequate water and ice to accommodate for the heat conditions at the tournament site.