



2020 Softball

Regular-Season Regulations

1.0 Sponsorship

1.1 The following member institutions sponsor softball as a varsity intercollegiate sport:

East Tennessee State University
Furman University
Mercer University
UNC Greensboro
Samford University
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Western Carolina University

2.0 Regular-Season Competition

2.1 **Scheduling:** NCAA policies regarding scheduling requirements are the official policies of the Southern Conference.

2.1.1 **Conference Scheduling:** Each school shall play all members of the Conference three times during the regular season (normally in a three-game weekend series at the site of one of the competing teams). The Southern Conference office shall produce a league master schedule at least three years prior to the start of each season. Conference games shall be played either on Friday and Saturday or Saturday and Sunday. Teams reserve the right to make changes to the Conference master schedule as long as participating athletics directors are agreeable to the moves and the moves are approved by the conference office. *(Approved 6/10. Updated 10/18)*

2.1.2 **Make-Up Games:** No make-up dates may be utilized to complete a Conference series if it is unable to be completed during a scheduled series window (i.e. Friday-Saturday or Saturday-Sunday).

2.1.3 **Moving Games:** Conference games may be moved to alternate or neutral locations if forced to due to inclement weather or other extenuating circumstances. Games may be moved to alternate days in advance only in extenuating circumstances (exams, holidays, weather, etc.). The doubleheader may be played on the first day of competition in anticipation of bad weather (i.e. Friday-Saturday or Saturday-Sunday). Each conference series shall be played within two consecutive days. The decision to move the games shall be decided by Wednesday at Noon Eastern Time the week of the Conference series. Teams reserve the right to make changes to the Conference series playing days due to future inclement weather as long as participating athletics directors or designee are agreeable to the moves and the moves are approved by the Conference Office. In all other instances, once a visiting team has arrived at a site, games may not be moved to alternate days.

2.2 **Championship Determination:** The Southern Conference champion shall be the team that finishes with the best won-loss percentage in Conference games during the regular season. In the case that two or more schools finish with identical won-loss records, they shall be declared co-champions.

2.3 **Regular-Season Finish:** League rank in the regular season shall determine the seeding position of teams into the Southern Conference Tournament. League rank shall be determined by each team's won-loss record in all Conference games during the regular season. Ties for seeding purposes shall be broken using the Southern Conference tie-breaking system.

2.4 **Playing Rules:** Playing rules as adopted by the NCAA shall be in effect for all Southern Conference games.

- 2.5 Halted Games:** All Conference games shall normally be seven innings in length. The Southern Conference shall adhere to the policies of the NCAA Softball Rules regarding regulation and halted games. No more than two games may be started in one day, but a halted game may be completed and two games started in one day with no game starting after 6:00 pm. If the last game of a series is not completed and the score is tied after becoming a regulation game, it shall be a complete game/tie.
- 2.6 International Tie-Breaker:** The international tie-breaker rule shall be used in all Conference games at the beginning of the 10th inning.
- 2.7 Eight-Run Rule:** The eight-run rule shall be in effect for all Conference games.
- 2.8 Official Ball:** The “official” ball (Rawlings NC12L-SC) as designated by the Conference office shall be used in all Conference games.
- 2.9 Official Scorer:** The home team shall provide an official scorer for all Conference games. The visiting team may provide a scorer for the purpose of improving the accuracy of data collection during a game. The home team scorer shall always be designated the official scorer.
- 2.10 NCAA Box Score:** The home team shall be responsible for recording NCAA statistical information for both teams and compiling an official NCAA box score. The home stats crew must send a completed final NCAA box score via e-mail to the Southern Conference office on the same day that a Southern Conference game is completed. The visiting head coach should receive a copy of the official NCAA box score after the conclusion of each Conference game.
- 2.11 Scouting Information:** Southern Conference teams shall not share scouting information on other Southern Conference teams with non-conference or Conference schools.
- 2.12 Uniforms:** For all Conference series, it is recommended that the home team wear light colored uniforms and the visiting team wear uniforms of contrasting color on the first day of competition. The home team may wear a colored shirt and the visiting team a contrasting shirt on the second day of competition. It is required that all conference schools place a Southern Conference logo on their game uniforms. The recommended placement is on the left or right sleeve of the jersey, facing the side, approximately three inches above the bottom of the sleeve; or on the left chest on sleeveless jerseys.
- 2.13 Complimentary Tickets:** The home team shall provide the visiting team with 50 complimentary tickets for each Conference game, provided that the home team is charging admission. The 50 complimentary tickets should be provided from a pass list given to the home institution by the visiting institution upon its arrival. In accordance with Southern Conference Sportsmanship Code Regulations, a buffer section of visiting team seats or empty space must be provided in the area immediately behind the visiting team dugout as it may be appropriate for each particular venue. The 50 complimentary tickets for the visiting team must be located within the buffer zone area. *(Revised 5/13)*
- 2.14 Student-Athlete Eligibility:** Each institution is responsible for having all of its student-athletes eligible prior to the season. All student-athlete eligibility profiles shall be transmitted to the Conference office prior to a school’s first day of competition. This information shall be filed and in accordance with the instructions of the Southern Conference Associate Commissioner for Compliance. If any questions arise, the Conference compliance administrator shall have the details on all student-athletes who are eligible for Conference regular-season and tournament competition.
- 2.15 Start Times:** The home team shall set all game times and locations for a Conference series. Night games may not be required for the last day of a series. Games on the last day of the series may not start prior to 1:00 p.m. unless a doubleheader is needed or both competing athletics directors are agreeable to starting prior to 1:00 p.m. Games may start after 6:00 p.m. only with the approval of the athletics directors or designee of the competing teams. For the resumption of halted games on the last day of a series, the resumption or starting time will be agreed upon by the two coaches, and if no agreement is possible, the umpire crew chief for the series shall set the time. *(Approved 10/12)*
- 2.15.1 Between Games:** For all Conference doubleheaders, 30 minutes will be used between games unless otherwise agreed upon by the two head coaches and umpires in advance.
- 2.16 Weather Decisions:** When weather or field conditions require a decision as to whether a game shall be started, the following procedure shall be used:
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- A. When the visiting team is not on site, the administration of the host institution shall determine if the game shall start on the day and time scheduled;
- B. When both teams are on site, after consulting with both coaches, the home game management director shall determine if the game is to start, except for the second game of a doubleheader; *(Approved 10/08)*
- C. Should bad weather or unfit conditions (excluding lightning) prevail during a game, the home plate umpire shall be the sole judge as to suspension, resumption, or termination of play. The home plate umpire of the first game shall be the sole judge as to whether playing conditions permit the start of the second game of a doubleheader. *(Revised and Effective 5/08)*
- D. In the case of lightning in the area, the home game management director shall have the authority to suspend and resume play and shall not be overruled by the home plate umpire. *(Effective 5/08)*

2.17 Protests: Head coaches may file game protests in accordance with NCAA Softball Rules. After filing a protest, the head coach shall advise his or her athletics director, who shall then notify the Southern Conference Commissioner of the protest and circumstances involved. The protesting team must forward the protest to the Commissioner within 48 hours of the starting time of the protested game. The Commissioner and the Softball Committee shall decide the course of action to be followed in resolving the protest with the use of NCAA Softball Rules, precedents from softball and other sports decisions, and Conference policies.

2.18 Field Requirements: All Conference fields are required or recommended to have the following:

- A. A backstop with a minimum distance of 25 feet and a maximum of 30 feet from home plate (required);
- B. An outfield fence with foul poles (required); by 2017, an institutional field with a 4-foot fence must be a minimum of 210 feet in left and right fields and 230 in center field, and it is highlight recommended that a municipal field with a 4-foot fence used by the institution be at those same distances.
- C. A scoreboard (required)
- D. An infield tarp (recommended);
- E. A skinned infield and natural grass outfield (recommended);
- F. Separate bullpens for each team equipped with regulation-sized home plates and pitcher's plates placed at regulation distance (recommended);
- G. If separate bullpens are not available, a single bullpen must be large enough to accommodate two pitchers (one from each team).

2.19 Bat Testing: All Conference games require bat testing. The testing will take place two hours before the first pitch with the crew chief, or the home institution administrator if the Crew Chief is not available. Representatives from both schools would be present during the testing. Testing would occur each day of the Conference series and the location of the testing would be done in close proximity to the field.

- A. Each team will be supplied with a conference mandated sticker of its school name (ETSU, FUR, MER, SAM, UTC, UNCG, WCU) and will be required to bring the stickers to all home and away conference games.
- B. The bat testing machine must be the NCAA approved version (Portable Barrel Compression Fixture)

2.20 Media Format Rule: All Conference games shall use the media format rule as stated in the NCAA Women's Softball Rules Book.

3.0 Softball Committee

3.1 The Southern Conference Softball Committee shall consist of at least one athletics director, one faculty athletics representative, one senior woman administrator, and one head coach. The sport committee shall perform the following duties:

3.1.1 Review the sport regulations for softball;

3.1.2 Make recommendations to the Southern Conference Senior Woman Administrators Association and Athletics Directors Association as situations warrant;

3.1.3 Ensure that coaches are informed about league rules and matters affecting softball in the Southern Conference;

3.1.4 Conduct surveys, etc.;

3.1.5 Administer, in general, the sport of softball in the Southern Conference.

4.0 Head Coaches Meetings

4.1 Southern Conference head coaches shall meet once a year to address all matters relating to the sport of softball and to make recommendations to the Southern Conference Softball Committee. This meeting shall normally take place in the month of August.

5.0 Officiating

5.1 **Assignments:** The Southern Conference Coordinator of Softball Officials, under the direction of the Southern Conference Commissioner and with the guidance of the Southern Conference Men's and Women's Officials Committee, shall establish a pool of officials for all Conference games and assign all officials. Three officials shall be assigned to a Conference series. Both officials shall work the plate during the series. One official shall not work consecutive games behind the plate.

5.2 **Evaluation Procedure:** An evaluation procedure shall be used to ensure the quality of officials. The evaluation procedure shall include head coaches' evaluations and evaluations by the Coordinator of Officials. Coaches shall review each official's performance through a standard form. These forms shall be sent to the Coordinator of Officials on the first working day following a Conference series.

5.3 **Officiating Fees:** For 2020, each official shall be paid a flat fee of \$665 per umpire for a 3-game conference series. Lodging for officials shall be the responsibility of the host institution. The host institution shall provide three rooms for one night. (Revised 7/19)

6.0 Game Management

6.1 The home athletics director (or his or her designee) shall serve as the game management director for a Southern Conference series. It is suggested that the game management director visit briefly with the officials and the visiting head coach prior to a series to answer any questions and inform them of his or her availability. The home athletics director and/or game management director also has the direct responsibility for crowd control as outlined in the Southern Conference Sportsmanship Code Regulations.

6.1.1 **Game Management Provisions:** The following provisions shall be provided to the visiting team by the home team:

- A. Bench: One 10-gallon cooler of water, one ice chest with ice and bags, two sleeves of cups, bench towels, one biohazard box.
- B. Dressing Room: A dressing room with showers if requested in advance. Shower towels as needed if requested in advance.

7.0 Public Address Announcer

7.1 Only the designated public address announcer may use a microphone during a Southern Conference game. The public address announcer is responsible for whatever is said over the PA system. The primary function of the announcer is to give specific information to the fans, not to incite them by unnecessary inflection of voice beyond the pre-game introduction of the home team.

8.0 Pre-Game Format

8.1 The home institution shall provide a minimum of two "official" (Rawlings NC12L-SC) Conference softballs to be used during Conference games. The host institution shall provide the visiting head coach with a pre-game itinerary and/or time line at least 72 hours prior to the start of a Conference game. The visiting team shall be given equal access to batting cages, field space, pitching machines, machine balls, screens and tees as the home team. This policy applies equally to indoor and outdoor facilities.

9.0 Cheerleaders, Pep Bands, Dance Teams, Mascots

- 9.1 Cheerleader Responsibilities:** Cheerleaders should be encouraged to help maintain good sportsmanship among the students and others in attendance. The head cheerleader should be ready at all times to instigate the most popular cheer in case an unpleasant situation should occur.
- 9.2 Cheerleader Restrictions:** Megaphones may never be turned toward the playing area. Amplified microphones are prohibited. Cheerleaders shall adhere to all rules as outlined by the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators (AACCA). Cheerleaders should never be located behind an opposing team's dugout.
- 9.3 Pep Band Restrictions:** Bands are allowed to play only during pre-game, between games, post game and between innings.
- 9.4 Dance Teams and Mascots:** Regulations as they apply to cheerleaders also apply to dance teams and mascots.
- 9.5 Travel Restrictions:** Cheerleading squads, pep bands and dance teams may travel during softball season only on weekends.

10.0 Artificial Noisemakers: Artificial noisemakers (air horns, electronic amplifiers, whistles, etc.) are not permissible in Southern Conference venues except for those amplifiers that are part of the official home or visiting team pep band or cheerleading squad. Such instruments shall be removed from the facility when discovered. Thunder sticks will be allowed on an experimental basis at softball games if distributed as part of a game-day promotion conducted by the home institution. *(Effective 5/08)*

- 10.1** Objects used to make noise or amplify sound to show support, approval or opposition to playing action other than body parts (i.e., voice, hands, and feet) are considered artificial noisemakers and therefore not permitted. *(Approved 6/16)*

11.0 Signs

- 11.1** Signs of a derogatory nature directed towards an individual opponent, visiting team or game official are not permitted in Southern Conference venues. It is the responsibility of the home institution to ensure that such signs are immediately removed.

12.0 Motorized Vehicles, Explosive Devices, Live Mascots

- 12.1** The home athletics director shall decide the policy regarding the use of explosive devices (cannons, rifles, rocket launchers, etc.), live mascots (horses, birds, etc.), and motorized vehicles in their facility. Visiting athletics directors need to request permission for the use of these items at least two weeks in advance and approval or disapproval of the request must be given immediately by the home athletics director.

13.0 Conduct

- 13.1 Coaches' Conduct:** All head and assistant coaches are to conduct themselves in such a manner during a game as to ensure or promote good crowd control. They also are responsible for the conduct of the players and other staff on the bench. Coaches (head and assistant) must follow Southern Conference Sportsmanship Code Regulations (Administrative Regulation 5.0) at all times.

13.2 Ejection/Suspension Policy: A coach or player removed from a contest for any unsportsmanlike act shall be subject to potential disciplinary action by the conference office, including suspension from future contests. *(Revised 5/19)*

- 13.3 Unsportsmanlike Behavior:** Acts of unsportsmanlike behavior or unethical conduct including but not limited to those described below shall make the offending party subject to sanctions by the conference.

- 13.3.1 Fighting:** Any attempt by a person to strike an opponent or contest participant in a combative manner unrelated to the sport involved or any act that insights an opponent to retaliate by acting in a similar manner shall be described as unsportsmanlike behavior.
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- 13.3.2 Aggressive Behavior:** The use of obscene gestures, profane language, or the display of hostile action towards officials, spectators, or opponents shall be described as unsportsmanlike.
- 13.3.3 Ejection:** The removal by an official from a competitive sport activity shall require the ejected participant to leave the vicinity of the competitive activity immediately.
- 13.3.4 Suspension:** A penalty that denies the involved participant from being in the vicinity of the contest suspended from during the time period beginning one hour prior to the scheduled contest until the conclusion of the contest. Suspension does not affect practice opportunities outside of the above time limitations.
- 13.3.5 Vicinity of Contest:** The immediate area/site of the competition extended to include any point or place from which the ejected/suspended individual could observe, supervise, or participate in any manner in the contest from which the participant is being ejected or suspended.
- 13.3.6 Competitive Conditions:** The failure of an institution to provide an environment for a contest that is safe and fair to competition shall be described as unsportsmanlike behavior.

14.0 Regular-Season Awards

- 14.1** The following awards shall be provided by the Conference and distributed to the appropriate institution following the conclusion of the Conference regular season:

- 14.1.1 Championship Trophy:** One trophy, presented to the team with the best won-loss percentage in Conference games. In the case of a tie, all tied teams shall receive trophies;
 - 14.1.2 All-Conference Team:** Twenty four (24) plaques (a 12-member first team and a 12-member second team) presented to the members of the All-Conference Team. All-Conference first and second teams will include utility player who did not play at one position for 50 percent or more of her team's games. All-Conference Team shall be voted on by the head coaches and the balloting shall be conducted by the Conference office. Coaches are not allowed to vote for their own players;
 - 14.1.3 Player of the Year:** One plaque presented to the player voted Player of the Year. The Player of the Year award shall be voted on by the head coaches and the balloting shall be conducted by the Conference office. Coaches are not allowed to vote for their own player;
 - 14.1.4 Pitcher of the Year:** One plaque presented to the player voted Pitcher of the Year. The Pitcher of the Year award shall be voted on by the head coaches and the balloting shall be conducted by the Conference office. Coaches are not allowed to vote for their own player;
 - 14.1.5 Freshman of the Year:** One plaque presented to the player voted Freshman of the Year. The Freshman of the Year award shall be presented to the highest vote getter on the All-Freshman Team voted on by the head coaches and the balloting shall be conducted by the Conference office. Coaches are not allowed to vote for their own player;
 - 14.1.6 Coach of the Year:** One plaque presented to the person voted Coach of the Year. The Coach of the Year award shall be voted on by the head coaches and the balloting shall be conducted by the Conference office;
 - 14.1.7 Players of the Week:** Eight certificates presented to student-athletes named Player of the Week during the regular season. The Player of the Week shall be selected by the Conference office;
 - 14.1.8 Pitchers of the Week:** Eight certificates presented to student-athletes named Pitcher of the Week during the regular season. The Pitcher of the Week shall be selected by the Conference office;
 - 14.1.9 Players of the Month:** A Player of the Month award shall be selected at the end of each month during the spring season. The Player of the Month shall be selected by the Conference office;
 - 14.1.10 Pitchers of the Month:** A Pitcher of the Month award shall be selected at the end of each month during the spring season. The Pitcher of the Month shall be selected by the Conference office;
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14.1.11 All-Freshman Team: An All-Freshman Team shall be named consisting of 10 freshmen, red shirt or otherwise. The members will be selected without regard to position and the freshman receiving the highest number of votes will be named as Freshman of the Year. Balloting will be done as it is for All-Conference voting. *(Approved 10/08)*

15.0 Two-Year Moratorium of Approved Sport Regulations: Sport regulations approved by the membership must be implemented for two full seasons before they may be considered for amendment, except in instances where changes are made to the regulation on a national level (i.e. an NCAA rule or a national governing body policy). Coaches' recommendations that are not approved by the membership are subject to the moratorium and may not be reconsidered by the membership for two years. A 75% vote of the athletic directors may overrule the two-year moratorium on a case-by-case basis. *(Approved and Effective 6/10)*

Conference Championship Regulations

1.0 Championship Format

- 1.1** At the conclusion of the regular season, a double-elimination Conference tournament shall be conducted to determine the Southern Conference Tournament champion and the recipient of the league's automatic bid to participate in the NCAA Division I Softball Championship. All teams that are eligible to compete will participate in the Conference Championship. The championship will normally be conducted over four days. If the Conference championship is not completed due to inclement weather or other extenuating circumstances, the NCAA Championship automatic bid will be presented to the highest seed remaining in the tournament.
- 1.2** For most Conference sports, the championship shall conclude no later than the original dates of competition, regardless of any weather-related delays or postponements. This shall be true in baseball, men's & women's golf, men's & women's lacrosse, men's & women's soccer, volleyball, men's & women's indoor track & field, rifle, wrestling, and men's & women's cross country. The only sports which permit one additional day to conclude the championship because of weather-related issues are men's & women's tennis, softball, and men's & women's outdoor track & field. Men's & women's basketball would be determined by a decision made by the Commissioner's office and the basketball committee. (Updated 7/18)

2.0 Championship Dates

- 2.1** The Southern Conference Championship will be conducted prior to the NCAA Division I Softball Championship on the dates recommended by the Southern Conference Athletics Directors Association. The dates of the 2020 Southern Conference Championship shall be May 6-9.

3.0 Championship Location

- 3.1 Bid Process:** The location of the tournament shall be determined by a bid process conducted by the Softball Committee. All bids shall be reviewed and voted on by the Southern Conference Senior Woman Administrators Association and Athletics Directors Association.

3.1.1 2020 Championship Location: The 2020 Softball Championship will be in Greensboro, NC and hosted by UNC Greensboro.

3.1.2 Future Championship Locations: UTC (2021)

4.0 Championship Schedule

- 4.1 Game Times:** All tournament game times shall be set by the Southern Conference Softball Committee. Games may not start before announced times.

4.1.1 Championship Unable To Reach Conclusion. If it is determined that the tournament cannot be played to completion, the highest seed remaining in the tournament will be declared the champion and receive the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Championship. If the tournament is not able to be played at all, the regular-season champion shall advance to the NCAA Tournament. All decisions relating to inclement weather shall be made by the Games Committee.

5.0 Tournament Administration

- 5.1 Softball Committee Involvement:** The Southern Conference Softball Committee shall provide general oversight of the tournament. The Softball Committee shall have the authority to discipline and/or fine any member institution that does not abide by Conference regulations.

- 5.2 Games Committee:** A Games Committee shall be appointed for the tournament consisting of Softball Committee members on site, the athletics director of the host institution or his or her designee, the Southern Conference championships administrator on site (who shall serve as chair of the committee), the tournament director, and the Umpire In Chief. The Games Committee shall:

A. Ensure that the tournament is conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Southern Conference as contained in the Southern Conference Championship manual and these sport regulations;

- B. Make decisions regarding situations that occur where resolution is not covered in the rules and regulations of the NCAA or the Southern Conference as stated in the Championship manual or these sport regulations;
- C. Inspect the playing facilities prior to the start of the event.

5.3 Tournament Director: The host institution or agency for the championship shall appoint a tournament director who, along with the conference liaison, shall perform the following functions under the direction of the Softball Committee:

- A. Serve as supervisor of the tournament;
- B. Plan and coordinate all activities of the tournament in conjunction with the Southern Conference Softball Committee and local organizing committee(s);
- C. Provide relevant tournament information to all coaches, athletics directors, senior woman administrators, chief executive officers, faculty athletics representatives and other necessary personnel of competing institutions;
- D. Coordinate and supervise the activities of the officials;
- E. Oversee servicing the needs of the participants and spectators as prescribed in the championship manual;
- F. Delegate duties and responsibilities to tournament personnel;
- G. Secure a certified trainer and other medical personnel for the tournament.

5.4 Media Coordinator: The tournament director shall appoint a tournament media coordinator, who shall perform the following duties:

- A. Coordinate and administer all media working areas and media hospitality areas;
- B. Process all media requests for working credentials;
- C. Coordinate the activities of the stats crew and make sure that statistics are made available to all media after each game;
- D. Write and distribute all releases as necessary prior to and during the tournament;
- E. Be responsible for all-tournament balloting;
- F. Provide seating charts for the media on each day of the tournament;
- G. Coordinate the installation of phone lines as necessary for radio, television and print media in the press box and in other media working areas;
- H. Make sure that all teams and electronic media are provided with pre-game itineraries and/or time lines at least one hour prior to each game;
- I. Fulfill the needs of Conference sports information directors not on site;

5.5 Medical Personnel: All medical staff for the tournament shall be appointed by the tournament director, who shall ensure that the following occurs:

- A. That a certified trainer is available for all practices and present at all games;
- B. That a general practitioner or orthopedic physician is on call for all games;
- C. That an EMS unit is on call at all times;
- D. That there is planned and pre-arranged access to medical facilities;
- E. That training facilities and training supplies are available for all tournament events;
- F. That information concerning medical and training accommodations is distributed to all head athletic trainers and head coaches prior to their arrival at the tournament site.

5.6 Officials: The Southern Conference Coordinator of Officials, working in conjunction with the Softball Committee, shall contract all officials to work the tournament and shall:

- A. Assign a pool of officials to work the tournament and make individual game assignments. The pool of officials should include the top rated officials rated by the head coaches whenever possible. Head coaches do not possess scratch power when it comes to the assigning of any official;
- B. Conduct pre-game and post-game meetings as necessary with officials;
- C. Conduct pre-game and post-game meetings as necessary with press box personnel.

5.7 Additional Tournament Personnel: The following additional personnel shall be appointed by the tournament director and/or tournament media coordinator:

- A. Stats crew;
 - B. Public address announcer;
 - C. Official scorer;
 - D. Scoreboard and matrix board operators;
 - E. Ball or bat persons (at least one for each team);
 - F. In addition, Southern Conference Softball Committee members (excluding the head coach representative) may be assigned specific duties as necessary.
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- 5.8 Promotions Director:** The tournament director shall appoint a promotions director who ensures that a marketing and promotions plan is created to promote awareness and ticket sales to fans of member institutions and their local communities, as well as the local community that the tournament is being played in.

6.0 Championship Manual

- 6.1** The Southern Conference staff liaison shall send a championship manual to all Conference chief executive officers, faculty athletics representatives, athletics directors, senior woman administrators, head coaches and sports information directors at least one month prior to the championship. The following information shall be contained in the manual:
- A. Facilities information;
 - B. Telephone numbers and addresses of key tournament personnel;
 - C. Local maps;
 - D. Dates, times and location of the tournament and related activities;
 - E. Information on team and institutional credentials and parking passes;
 - F. A tournament itinerary;
 - G. Medical and training information;
 - H. Media information;
 - I. Information on hospitality and social functions;
 - J. Names and responsibilities of Local Organizing Committee personnel;
 - K. Names and responsibilities of host institution personnel;
 - L. A tournament emergency plan and emergency telephone numbers.

7.0 Tournament Procedures

- 7.1 Seeding:** The seeds for the tournament shall be determined based on each team's regular-season Conference finish. In the event of a tie for a particular seed, the seed will be determined as follows:
- A. If one team has defeated the other team a greater number of times, that team shall be awarded the higher seeded position;
 - B. If the tied teams split games, the higher position will be awarded to the team that has the best won-loss record against the highest seeded team not involved in the tie;
 - C. If each team has the same record against the highest seeded team not involved in the tie, then the won-loss records against the next highest seeded team not involved in the tie would be considered and so on down the line until the tie is broken;
 - D. If the records are the same against all teams, then the seeded position would be determined by a toss of the coin by the Southern Conference Commissioner;
 - E. In the event of a three-way tie, the won-loss record of the tied teams against each other is first considered;
 - F. If the teams are still tied, the teams' record against the next highest seeded team after the three-way tie is considered, and so forth until the tie is broken;
 - G. If there is still a tie, the seeded position of the teams will be determined by a draw conducted by the Southern Conference Commissioner;
 - H. For multiple ties larger than a three-way tie, the same procedure will be applied as used to break a three-way tie; and
 - I. For all multiple ties, the tie is broken by first deciding the highest seeded team involved in the tie before deciding other seeding positions.
- 7.2. Ticket Prices:** Prices for the 2020 Southern Conference Tournament shall be established by the host institution and approved by the Softball Committee.
- 7.2.1 Complimentary Tickets:** Schools shall receive no complimentary tickets for the 2020 Southern Conference Tournament.
- 7.3 Game Balls:** The "official" (Rawlings NC12L-SC) Conference softball shall be used during all tournament games. The Conference office shall be responsible for ordering a minimum of three dozen new balls for use during the tournament.
- 7.4 Playing Rules:** The playing rules for the Southern Conference Championship shall conform to those rules adopted for NCAA Division I Softball and the Southern Conference as stated in the Southern Conference Championship Manual and these sport regulations.
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- 7.5 Uniforms:** For all tournament games, the higher seeded team shall have its choice of uniform color and the lower seeded team must wear a uniform of contrasting color. If a team plays consecutive games, then that team shall wear the same uniforms in the second game and their opponents should wear a contrasting color. All competitors must wear exclusively the official uniform of their institution in competition, warm-up and during the post-tournament awards ceremony. In accordance with NCAA rules, the institutions' official uniform (including warm-ups) and all other items of apparel (socks, head bands, t-shirts, wrist bands, towels, etc.) should bear only a single manufacturer's or distributors' normal label or trademark. The label or trademark may not exceed 2 1/4 inches square in size. Equipment (i.e., shoes) may bear only the manufacturer's normal label or trademark as it is used on all such items for sale to the general public. Failure to comply with this regulation may cause disqualification or may jeopardize a student-athlete's eligibility.
- 7.6 Student-Athlete Eligibility:** Each institution is responsible for submitting a list of competing student-athletes to the Conference compliance administrator no later than three (3) days prior to the start of the tournament. The Conference office will verify the eligibility of these student-athletes and will notify an institution if a problem arises with any of its student-athletes. Student-athletes not deemed eligible to compete may not be in uniform during the Conference tournament.
- 7.7 Head Coaches Meeting:** A Southern Conference head coaches meeting will be conducted by conference call prior to the championship. The Softball Committee Chair will chair the call and review information pertinent to the tournament. The head coach of each institution is required to participate on this call. Head coaches who do not participate are subject to disciplinary action as imposed by the Softball Committee and enforced by the Commissioner.
- 7.8 Pre-Game Format:** The following items address the issue of pre-game format:
- A. Games shall not begin prior to their announced start times;
 - B. Each team shall be allowed a minimum of 7 minutes of split warm-up time on the field prior to their game unless the grounds are too wet and work is necessary to make it suitable for play (approved 10/14);
 - C. Batting practice shall be conducted on practice fields or in batting cages, but shall not be conducted on the tournament field;
 - D. A national anthem shall be played prior to the first game each day.
 - E. Bat testing will take place prior to a team's first game each day of the tournament.
- 7.8.1 Player Introductions:** Pre-game player introductions for the tournament shall be as follows:
- A. Prior to each team's first game in the tournament, and prior to the championship game, all players and coaches shall be introduced to the crowd. For all other games, only the starting lineups will be announced.
 - B. As each player is introduced for their first game and for the championship game, participants will line up on the foul line nearest to their dugout as they are introduced.
- 7.9 Squad Size Restrictions:** Travel squads to the tournament are limited to 20 student-athletes in uniform and 28 institutional representatives. A student-athlete will need a valid participant credential to enter the tournament venue. Coaches, trainers, managers and student-athletes not in uniform will need to display a visible participant credential to be allowed in their dugout during a game. In the dugout, and in the bullpen areas, each team is limited to eligible players in uniform, official coaches in uniform, one trainer, one manager and a maximum of two bat handlers (who should be in appropriate uniform). Teams will declare their 20-person player rosters at the head coaches meeting prior to the tournament.
- 7.10 Practice Policies:** It is the policy of the Southern Conference to make as many practice opportunities as possible available to competing teams during the Southern Conference Tournament. For all practices, teams will be assigned practice times based upon tournament seeding (higher seeded teams will have the first choice of practice times). (*Revised 6/16*) Each participating team shall be ensured a one and a half hour practice time on the tournament field on the day prior to the tournament, unless the tournament field is deemed not suitable for play on that day. The host institution shall secure off-site practice facilities for teams to utilize during the remainder of the tournament. (*Revised 1/09*)
- 7.11 Home Team Determination:** The higher seeded team shall be the home team for the first four games of the tournament. After that, the home team shall be determined by using the following formula (in order):
- A. The institution that has been the home team the fewer number of times during the tournament;
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- B. If two teams are equal in the number of times they have been the home team, but unequal in the number of times they have been visitor, then the team that has been the visitor more times shall be designated the home team;
- C. If two teams are equal in the number of times they have been home and visitor, then the team that was the visitor in its preceding game shall be the home team;
- D. If two teams are equal in the number of times they have been home and visitor and each team was the visitor in its preceding game, then, if the teams have met previously in the tournament, the visitor from the preceding game between the teams shall be the home team for the game in question;
- E. If the above procedures do not resolve the matter, the home team shall be determined by a coin toss.

7.12 Dugouts: The home team shall occupy the third-base dugout. A team playing back-to-back games shall have the option of moving dugouts or remaining in their present dugout.

7.12.1 Dugout Supplies: The host institution shall provide towels, ice, cups and water in each dugout during the tournament.

7.12.2 Dugout Props: As per NCAA rules, props will not be permitted in dugouts during the regular season and during conference tournament play. (*Effective 6/16*)

7.13 Media Policies: All coaches and student-athletes shall be available for interviews with the media following each game after a 10-minute cooling off period has been observed.

7.13.1 Cooling Off Period: The cooling off period will begin when all coaches and players have left the dugout following a game. The cooling off period will not be extended to allow coaches or players to do interviews with a broadcasting television network. In the event that these interviews take place, the cooling off period will begin when the majority of a team's players and coaches have left the dugout.

7.13.2 Dressing Rooms: The dressing rooms of teams competing in the Southern Conference Tournament will be considered closed unless a media member states a desire to enter the dressing room area prior to the conclusion of a game. This request must be made to the tournament media coordinator or the sports information director of the participating team.

7.14 Officials Responsibilities: Officials and their duties are outlined in the NCAA Softball Rules.

7.15 International Tiebreaker Rule: The international tiebreaker rule will be utilized in all conference tournament games except the championship game(s).

7.16 Eight-Run Rule: The eight-run rule will be utilized in all conference tournament games including the championship game(s).

8.0 Tournament Awards

8.1 Awards Ceremony: Immediately following the conclusion of the championship game, a tournament awards ceremony shall be held on the infield. The head coach and student-athletes of the winning team shall remain in their dugout for the awards ceremony. The head coach and student-athletes of the runner-up team shall have the option of immediately exiting the field following the game or remaining for the awards ceremony. The following awards shall be provided by the Conference office and distributed at the awards ceremony:

8.1.1 Championship Trophy: One trophy presented to the head coach and captains of the winning team;

8.1.2 Runner-up Trophy: One trophy presented to the head coach and captains of the runner-up team;

8.1.3 All-Tournament Team: Ten plaques presented to members of the All-Tournament Team. The All-Tournament Team shall be selected without consideration of playing position by a committee of voters appointed by the tournament media coordinator. The balloting shall be conducted by the tournament media coordinator;

8.1.4 Most Outstanding Player: One plaque presented to the player selected as the Most Outstanding Player of the tournament. The Most Outstanding Player shall be one of the ten members of the All-Tournament Team and is selected by a committee of voters appointed by the tournament media coordinator. The balloting shall be conducted by the tournament media coordinator;

8.1.5 NCAA Championship Automatic Bid: One certificate presented to the athletics director or senior woman administrator of the winning school, signifying their institution's automatic bid to the NCAA Division I Women's Softball Championship.

8.2 Other Awards: Other awards presented in conjunction with the Southern Conference Championship are as follows:

8.2.1 Individual Championship Team Plaques: Twenty individual plaques will be presented to the head coach of the championship team for presentation to the student-athletes of the championship team. These plaques will be presented at the head coach's discretion.

8.2.2 Southern Conference Pinnacle Award: The Conference annually recognizes the student-athlete with the highest cumulative GPA from the team winning the Conference post-season tournament or meet in each sport. The criteria for the Pinnacle Award are as follows: the student-athlete must be an active member on the team roster, present at the championship and eligible to compete; the student-athlete is permitted to win only once per year, even if the student competes in more than one sport; the student-athlete must have a 3.0 GPA or better; the student-athlete should be at least a sophomore in academic standing (minimum two completed semesters at the Conference institution). For tiebreaking purposes, the following considerations shall be used (in order): current cumulative GPA (calculated to hundredths, e.g. 3.54) based on all semesters completed up to the point of the championship, including January terms; and percentage of credit hours the student-athlete has completed toward their major.
(Approved 6/16)

9.0 Institutional Passes

9.1 VIP Hospitality Passes: If necessary, each member institution shall receive VIP Hospitality passes for use during the Southern Conference Championship, provided that VIP functions are conducted. These passes shall be provided in a number as approved by the Softball Committee. The passes may be distributed at the discretion of each school's athletics director or senior woman administrator.

9.2 VIP Parking Passes: Each member institution shall receive VIP Parking passes for use during the Southern Conference Championship. These passes shall be provided in a number as approved by the Softball Committee. The passes may be distributed at the discretion of each school's athletics director or senior woman administrator.

9.3 Team Bus Parking Passes: If necessary, each competing team shall be awarded bus passes as needed for use during the Southern Conference Championship. The bus passes shall be distributed by the tournament director and are non-transferable.
