

2023 Homeschool World Series - Tournament Rules

Changes from last year

1. In pool games only, extra innings will begin with a base-runner on 2nd base (the player in the batting order *just before* the first hitter due up to bat that inning). If that runner should score, the run is scored as unearned.
2. Electronic scoring systems are allowed for the home team “official” scorebook, if they support pitch-by-pitch tracking. Note: if the home team’s system should experience any technical issues, the official book will switch to the visiting team’s scorekeeper.

National Federation of High Schools Rules Apply, with only these Exceptions/Additions

Bracket and tournament updates: The tournament bracket specifies the intended game times, fields, and matchups for each game in the World Series. Tournament staff instructions can override the bracket with instructions for teams or groups of teams, and updates to the bracket will be posted periodically throughout the tournament. Changes can be driven by bracket results or outside factors e.g. weather. Teams and individual families should refer to hwsa.net frequently for up-to-date information. We strive to post updates as quickly as possible to allow sufficient advance warning for travel time, etc. Failure of players to notice or plan for a bracket update will not be cause for a delay or replay of any game.

Game balls, balls out of play: HWSA will provide game balls meeting NFHS standards. Each home run ball may be kept by the team/player. Other game balls out of play must be returned to the field or to the Field Manager; **COACHES** please ask your families for help with this. Offensive team retrieves foul balls behind catcher. Both teams retrieve foul balls along fence and out of play on their respective side of field. Our field managers have candy to exchange for ball returns!

Game schedule: Game times & fields for Tues. and Thurs. may be adjusted, contingent on the previous day’s results. Updates will be posted as early as possible when tie-breakers/replays become needed. Refer to hwsa.net for regular updates.

Weather contingencies: We will use Wednesday as a rain makeup day, if needed. After Wednesday, we will do whatever it takes to get the tournament completed, even if it means shortening games and/or playing at unusual times or places. In the event of rainy conditions, please be flexible as we work out field and time contingencies. Refer to hwsa.net for updates.

- **COACHES**, please confirm your correct contact information (cell #) with the Tournament Director AND ensure that your cell-phone is charged and monitored with the ringer and text notification ON at ALL times.
- For schedule changes due to weather, teams should be flexible and prepared to play within 2 hours’ notice.

Home/Visitor dugouts: Home (H) and visiting (V) teams are denoted on the bracket for some games; for other games there is a coin-flip needed to determine the Home team. Please check the tournament program book for details on each game.

- When both teams are newly arriving at a particular field, the Home team will occupy the First Base Dugout
- When one of the opposing teams has just completed a game *on the same field*, they will remain in their dugout regardless of which team is Home/Visitor
- **COACHES:** If a coin-flip is needed to determine Home/Visitor for the next game, it will occur in the tournament office; otherwise via video call after games complete for the day. Results may be texted after the coin-flip if a call is missed.

Official score book & scoreboard: The **home** team score book (or tracking app, if it supports pitch-by-pitch tracking) will be the “official score book” for each game. The official scorekeeper may NOT be in the dugout, and must be accessible to the plate umpire. It is strongly encouraged that the scorekeepers from each team consult together throughout the game. Any technical difficulties with the home team’s scoring will cause the official book to transfer to the visiting team’s scorekeeper. The **visiting** team will provide the scoreboard operator.

Pre-game infield/outfield: if time allows for both teams to take “in and out”; 8 minutes maximum allowed per team. Game times will not be altered in order to allow for pre-game infield. Use the outfields while fields are being prepared.

Courtesy runners: Are allowed at coach's discretion (with any number of outs) only for the catcher and pitcher of record.

Protests: Protests are allowed on potential rule interpretations only; there are no protests on judgment calls by the umpire. Protests must be handled at the time of the dispute before the next pitch. See the protest section in the Rules of Conduct.

HWSA rules of conduct: The rules of conduct that have been adopted by the Board of Directors will apply. Please refer to the *Rules of Conduct* printed in the program. The tournament staff is committed to running the tournament in a way that is God-honoring, and to making the Homeschool World Series a family-friendly event in every respect.

Fan behavior: Head coaches are responsible for the conduct of team fans during the game. If a fan becomes unruly and refuses to control his or her tongue, the Field Manager or an HWSA Board Member will first ask the head coach to control the fan, and if needed, to remove them from the premises. If the fan refuses to leave the fields, the team will forfeit the game.

Ejection: A player who is ejected from a game (for whatever reason) may not take the field during the next game. A coach who is ejected may not take the field or be in the dugout during the next game. Depending upon the infraction, HWSA may take additional disciplinary action against an ejected coach. Decisions about additional disciplinary action against an ejected player is the responsibility of the team.

Pitcher usage: HWSA does not have "pitch count" rules. It is the responsibility of the individual coaches to be sensitive to the health and welfare of their pitchers' arms.

Dugout personnel: Only coaches listed on the roster are permitted in the dugouts during games. "Bat boys" are allowed but must wear a helmet at all times. Non-rostered players may be in the dugout but may *not* take the field for game play or be in full uniform. The Home/official scorebook may not be in the dugout, but the Visitor scorebook may be kept in the dugout.

Dugout water: Teams are to provide their own water for the dugout.

Uniforms: Unless otherwise agreed, the Home team wears white or their lightest color; Visitor wears their darkest color.

Coaching attire: The head coach (manager) and all base coaches must wear team uniforms, (windbreakers are okay). We encourage base coaches to consider helmets or helmet-hats. Assistant coaches not on the field during game play are exempt.

Official rosters: The World Series Program contains the official roster for each team. No player who is absent from the program roster may take the field for live game action *or* be in full uniform. Any discrepancies in jersey numbers from what is printed in the Program should be brought to the attention of the Field Manager opposing coach before a game starts.

Medical needs: HWSA does not staff medical experts onsite for the tournament. For any emergency issues, 911 should be called. For non-emergencies, the tournament office has a list of nearby care facilities.

Lightning: In the event of lightning danger, play will be halted on all fields signaled by three blasts from an airhorn. All players and coaches must take shelter in a dugout until given clearance to be back out on the field.

Practice fields: All batting cages and fields 1 through 8 are available for Practice beginning at noon Sunday afternoon. Practice is not allowed on the Stadium Field (Field 5). Field use is limited to 90 minutes per team; first come, first served. Fields are NOT available for practice on the off-day Wednesday — only batting cages are open on this day.

Number of games: Weather permitting, teams will play a minimum of 5 games and a maximum of 7 games. The number of games depends on whether a tie-breaker game is needed after pool play, and whether a Q-Game Replay is required.

Tournament award ceremonies: All teams that qualify for medals (Div. I – top 3; Div. II – top 2; Div. III – top 1) are expected to participate in the award ceremonies held immediately following the conclusion of each division championship game. All-Americans (Div. 1 & 2) and Div. 3 All-Tournament awards will be presented at this ceremony as well.

2023 HWSA Seeding and Tie-Breaker Rules

Pre-tournament pool play drawing: The top returning teams from the last HWSA Division I have been pre-seeded across the pool groups. At the coaches meeting, remaining D1 teams and last year's D2 winner will be given the option to select their slot for pool play, prior to the random draw. The other teams will then complete a random draw to fill out the remaining positions.

Pool play tie-breakers (optional): If all 3 teams in a 3-team pool end up with a 1-1 record there will be a tiebreaker needed. The top team based on the tie-break criteria (below) will advance to the Q round, and a tie-break game will be played Tuesday morning between the other two tied teams. The tie-break game winner will advance to the Q round, the loser will be in the bottom group of teams from which Division III will be formed.

Q-round seeding & tie-break criteria: After Pool play is completed, the following seeding and tie-break criteria will be evaluated one at a time in the sequence below, until the teams can be ranked for the Qualifying round:

- Better Win/Loss record to-date in the tournament
- Lower average number of runs allowed per defensive inning
- Higher average number of runs scored per offensive inning
- Coin-flip used if teams remain fully tied through criteria above

We will text an image of the Q-round brackets to coaches at the earliest opportunity once seeding is completed. An update will also be posted to the website brackets.

Q-game replays (optional): If a lower seed defeats a team which went 2-0 in pool play, a Q-game replay will be scheduled, the winner of which to receive a berth in Division I, the loser in Division II. In all other situations, the winner of the Q game immediately gains a Division I berth, and the loser goes to Division II. If a replay game is needed, it can be scheduled for later Tuesday if both teams agree; otherwise it will occur Thursday morning

Division III formation, seeding & results: as there are 6 pools but slots for only 5 teams in Division III this year, the top team among the six bottom teams from pool play will be advanced into the Q round based on tie-break criteria applied in this order: record, run differential per game, least RA/inning, most RS/inning, coin-flip. These same criteria will be applied based solely on results from rounds 1-3 to determine final Division III results.

Game times & time limits: Pool games will have a 2 hour and 10 minute time limit. Games throughout the rest of the week which are time-limited have a 2 hour 30 minute limit. No new inning may start (gauged immediately after last out of previous inning) after time has expired. The plate umpire will keep the time and will communicate the start time to both coaches.

Time limit exceptions: The time limit does not apply for the Div. I and Div. II semi-final games nor for the three division championship games. These games are all 7 innings in length, with mercy rules in effect.

Ties & extra innings: There will be no tie games. Games in all rounds will be played until a winner is determined, regardless of time limits. In pool play extra innings, a baserunner (the player just ahead of the first batter of the inning) begins on 2nd base. If that runner should score, the run is scored as unearned.

Mercy rule: if the winning team is ahead 20 runs after their opponent has batted 3 innings, 15 runs after 4 innings, or 10 runs after 5 innings, a mercy rule is engaged and the game is ended. Mercy rule applies for all games, including championships.

Double-headers: All teams will play twice on Monday. When a team plays back-to-back games, 45 minutes, if possible, will be allowed between games. Some teams will play doubleheaders on Tuesday or Thursday if a tie-breaker &/or Q-Game Replay is required. There is no possibility of playing 3 games in one day for any team.