

2026 Dairyland Classic – Tournament Rules

The official **2026 USA Softball (USA/ASA)** playing rules will be followed for the 2026 Dairyland Classic, **with the following exceptions:**

1. Team Roster & Lineup

- Teams **cannot play with fewer than 8 players.**
- Teams **may bat up to 12 players** (10 fielders + 2 extra hitters).
- Teams may start with 8 players and add a 9th and 10th.
- Teams may start with 9 and add a 10th.

2. Player Reduction

- Teams can only reduce players during a game due to **injuries**, without penalty.
- Player **ejections result in an automatic out** unless a sub is available.

3. Player Eligibility

- All players **must** be registered in the iPride Softball Player Portal and have an iPride rating. **No player without an iPride rating is permitted to play.**
- Players **may not be on more than one roster.**
- All players must be **registered before playing in any game.**
- No new registrations after **Pool Play** ends.
- Exceptions may be granted by the Tournament Director for **extraordinary circumstances.**

4. Divisional Placements: Teams will be placed into one of 3 divisions based on team ratings, calculated by the sum of the top 10 ratings on the team, as indicated below:

- **C Division:** Team rating of 130 or lower (no player rating over 14)
- **D Division:** Team rating of 95 or lower (no player rating over 10)
- **E Division:** Team rating of 60 or lower (no player rating over 6)

5. Division Adjustments

- Divisions may split into **Competitive/Recreational sub-divisions** based on team counts and ratings. (i.e. C-Competitive or C1 and C-Recreational or C2)
- The **Tournament Director** reserves the right to adjust placements for fair play.
- E Division teams may be moved to **D-Recreational (D2)** if needed due to lack of registered E Division teams.

6. Uniforms

- Uniforms are not mandatory, but **similar colored shirts** are preferred.
- Each shirt must have a **unique number that is 4” or larger on the back.**
- Exceptions allowed by umpire or tournament director’s discretion.

2026 Dairyland Classic – Tournament Rules

7. Jewelry

- **No metal jewelry** is allowed during games.
- Exceptions: fitness trackers (must have a non-metal band), medical alert jewelry, tournament wristbands.

8. Field Access

- No infield or batting practice is allowed on tournament fields unless the field is designated as a practice field.

9. Pool Play Home/Away

- Each team will be assigned at least **one home and one away game**.
- Any odd number of pool play games will result in a **random home/away** assignment that will be completed before the start of the tournament by the tournament committee.

10. Double Elimination Home Team

- The higher seed will be the home team.
- **"If" games:** The home team will be decided by **coin toss** .

11. Scorekeeping

- **The umpire will maintain the official score.** Designated scorekeepers may provide assistance to the umpire.
- Teams must verify score after each ½ inning.
- Managers must **sign the official scorecard** post-game.

12. Batting Count

- **3 Ball / 2 Strike Count:** All batters will begin with a 1-1 count.
- **There is no courtesy foul.** A foul ball on the second strike will result in an out.

13. Game Time Limits – All games are scheduled for 7 innings. The umpire will notify managers of the official start time of each game. A time limit is in effect and will supersede the innings as follows:

- **Pool Play:** No new inning after **50 mins**.
- **Double Elim:** No new inning after **55 mins**.
- **Placement Games (1st–3rd):** 7 innings or 65 mins until there is a winner
- **Beer Cups Games:** 55 mins (if applicable).

2026 Dairyland Classic – Tournament Rules

14. Run Rules- apply to pool play and double elimination games.

- 20 runs after 3 innings
- 15 runs after 4 innings
- 10 runs after 5 innings

15. Tie Games

- **Pool Play:** Games can end in a tie.
- **Tournament Play:** International tiebreaker rules will be utilized, and games will continue in a **one-pitch format, with the last batter of the previous inning starting at 2nd base.**

16. Double Elimination Seeding

1. Win/Loss/Tie record
 2. Head-to-head
 3. Runs allowed
 4. Coin toss
- Extra pool games: In the event a team plays an extra pool game, the runs allowed and the win/loss in that game will not count towards the total, but the results of the game (win/loss) will be used in **head-to-head consideration** if there is a tie in pool play occurs.

17. Courtesy Runners

- 1 per inning (must be on lineup or roster).
- Umpires may require a courtesy runner for an injury ("the blood rule").
- PIP players must be **declared before the first Pool Play game** and during the pregame meeting with the umpire. If a PIP player requires a runner, this will not count as a courtesy runner.
- Pitchers are **not** automatically granted courtesy runners.

18. Equipment Rules

- **Only USA/ASA legal bats** are allowed.
- Bats are **subject to inspection** at any time.
- **Metal cleats are NOT allowed.**

19. Stealing Bases

- Stealing bases is NOT allowed in any division.

2026 Dairyland Classic – Tournament Rules

20. Ejections

- Umpires have the authority to eject players or coaches for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- **Ejections may not be protested.**
- Ejected players **are not eligible for their next game.**

21. Umpire Authority

- Once a game starts, the umpire has full authority to **rule on any issue** not covered here.

22. Home Runs

- **Once the umpire has signaled for a homerun**, the batter and all baserunners will be credited with a run and are not required to round the bases.
- Allowed Homeruns:
 - **C Division: 1** Over-the-fence homerun per game.
 - **D Division: 0** Over-the-fence homeruns per game.
 - **E Division: 0** Over-the-fence homeruns per game.
 - Any additional over-the-fence homeruns after a team has reached their maximum allowed number will result in an **inning-ending out.**

23. Music & Noisemakers

- Music: Teams are permitted to play music through speakers **while they are in the dugout.**
 - The volume level should not exceed levels deemed “excessive” **at the discretion of the umpire.**
 - Music with explicit, offensive, or profane lyrics is not permitted. **This is at the discretion of the umpire.**
 - The opposing team may also ask the umpire to have the team playing music to “skip” a song with offensive content.
 - If a team does not have a speaker, the team who has a speaker may allow their music to play for the duration of the game if both managers agree.
- Noisemakers: Clack fans, megaphones, vuvuzelas, LOUD cups, etc. are **not permitted to be used when the pitcher is set to deliver the pitch.**
 - This rule also applies to spectators supporting the team.
 - The umpire will issue one (1) warning but maintains the right to prohibit further use of any noisemakers.

2026 Dairyland Classic – Tournament Rules

24. Protests

- No protests allowed for:
 - Balls, strikes, safe/out calls
 - Player rankings
- There will be no protests of calls made by umpires.
- There will be no protests accepted from or initiated by individual players, teams, and/or coaches.
- Tournament Directors reserve the right to change divisional placement.

25. Rule Changes

- The Tournament Director reserves the right to **modify rules at any time** due to:
 - USA/ASA changes
 - Weather
 - SSBL League rule changes

Managers will receive an official copy of the rules before the tournament begins.