



NFHS 2004 SOFTBALL BAT RULE INFORMATION

NFHS BAT RULE

2004 NFHS Softball Rules Book, Rule 1-5-4 states: *“Effective January 1, 2004, the bat shall meet the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) 2004 Bat Performance Standard.”*

ASA 2004 PERFORMANCE STANDARD

ASA has adopted a new bat performance standard, effective January 1, 2004. This change has been made in light of recent scientific developments. Much of the research leading to the new bat standard and the new ASTM test method has been funded by ASA. ASA has determined that this change is necessary because some of the highest performing bats on the market are adversely affecting the character and integrity of the game and rendering a player’s performance more a product of his/her bat than his/her individual skill.

The ASTM F1890 test method is no longer the industry standard, even though some softball associations continue to rely on this test method. ASTM has just recently developed the ASTM F2219 test method. The most recent version of F2219 is available at www.astm.org – click on “standards.” This test method provides a number of improvements over the old ASTM F1890 test method. For example, F2219 allows bats to be tested in the lab at a much higher speed, including speeds actually found in the field of play. It also places tighter tolerances on testing procedures, such as the softballs that are used in conducting the bat test. ASTM F2219 allows the testing to be done at the “sweet spot” of the bat - regardless of where that point is along the barrel of the bat.

The ASA 2004 bat standard relies on the swing speed of the batter. ASA has learned and now takes into account that a batter’s swing speed is more dependent on the distribution of the weight across the length of the bat than just the total weight of the bat alone. This weight distribution feature is often referred to as the bat’s moment of inertia, and is incorporated into the new 2004 standard. The 2004 standard is also based on more accurate information about the speeds involved in the “bat-ball collision,” which are swing speed of the bat and the pitch speed of the ball.

The 2004 bat standard has a maximum batted ball speed (BBS) limit of 98 mph when tested according to the ASTM F2219 test method (as approved for balloting). Even though this limit is numerically higher than the ASA 2000 bat performance standard, in science and in practice the 2004 bat standard is actually a reduction compared to the 2000 bat standard. The F2219 testing is done at higher speeds than under the old F1890 standard. As a result, some bats that satisfied the old ASA standard of 125 fps will not pass the new 98 mph standard. Bats that do not satisfy the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard will not be permitted in NFHS play, effective January 1, 2004. Bats that satisfy the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard will be authorized to display a new 2004 ASA certification mark.

Older bats that pass the new standard will be added to the list of approved bats and will be permitted for NFHS play.

PERMANENT 2004 CERTIFICATION MARK

To indicate that a bat meets the new 2004 standard, the permanent mark, as shown below, is placed only on those bats that have been recently manufactured and meet the 2004 performance standard.



ENFORCEMENT

Each state association shall determine appropriate enforcement procedures within their own state. Below are a few suggestions:

1. Have **each participating team** provide the umpires a current printed copy of the approved bat list from the ASA Web site. Each bat in their possession and intended for use should be highlighted, so that the umpire can quickly inspect and verify the bat's legality. A new list need only be printed off when new bats are added to the team's inventory.
2. Have the **host school** provide the umpires upon arrival, a current printed copy of the approved bat list, from the ASA Web site. The list should be printed off at least once per week.
3. Have **umpires** carry with them a current printed copy of the approved bat list from the ASA Web site to utilize when inspecting bats. The list should be printed off at least once per week.
4. Have **both** the schools and the umpires be responsible for being in possession of a current approved bat list from the ASA Web site.

Detailed information about the ASA Bat Certification Program can be found at http://www.asasoftball.com/about/certified_equipment.asp.



NFHS 2004 Softball Bat Rule

FAQ's

Q: What bats can be used for high school play in 2004?

A: As of January 1, 2004, NFHS Softball Rule 1-3-5 (1-5-4 in 2004 NFHS Softball Rules Book) indicates that in order for a bat to be legal it must meet the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard. In addition, all bats shall meet the other NFHS bat specifications.

Q: Why did ASA decide to change its bat standard?

A: ASA invoked a rule indicating, "The ASA reserves the right to withhold or withdraw approval of any equipment which, in the ASA's sole determination, significantly changes the character of the game, affects the safety of participants or spectators, or renders a player's performance more a product of the player's equipment rather than the player's individual skill."

Q: Why did the NFHS decide to adopt this standard for 2004?

A: The NFHS Softball Rules Committee voted to adopt the new ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard, effective January 1, 2004 because some of the highest performing bats on the market are adversely affecting the character and integrity of the game and rendering a player's performance more a product of equipment than individual skill. The change may also assist with reducing the risk of injury to participants. The NFHS followed both the ASA and the NCAA in adopting this new standard for 2004.

**Q: When can I find out if my bat meets the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard?
When will the list of 2004 approved bats be released?**

A: The new ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard takes effect January 1, 2004. ASA will develop a listing of bats approved under this new standard and will post that listing on its website. But that list cannot be developed until bat manufacturers submit their bat models for ASA approval under the new standard.

Q: What if my bat doesn't show up on the list of bats that conform to the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard?

A: The bat will not be approved for NFHS play in 2004 and beyond – unless the NFHS makes any change in the NFHS Softball Rules Book.

Q: I want to go out and buy a new bat, but I want to make sure it meets the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard. What should I do?

A: Contact the bat manufacturer to determine whether the bat model satisfies the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard. Once the bat manufacturer has submitted the model for ASA approval, and the bat model satisfies the 2004 standard, then the bat will be listed on the approved bat list posted on the ASA website, www.asasoftball.com.

Q: In light of the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard, do I still need to recertify any of my bats that were banned last year?

A: Yes, if you want to use that bat in NFHS play for the remainder of 2003.

Q: My bat has the ASA 2000 mark (and, if necessary, the ASA recertification mark). Is my bat going to be legal under the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard?

A: Maybe. Even bats with the ASA 2000 mark and the ASA recertification mark must satisfy the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard before they will be allowed in NFHS play beginning January 1, 2004.

Q: I have a bat that does not have the ASA 2000 mark or the new ASA 2004 mark. Is it going to be legal for NFHS play?

A: Maybe. If the bat model is listed on the approved website list, it will be legal for NFHS play, even without a permanent mark.

Q: Will the manufacturers be required to send in every model for certification under the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard?

A: No. As it has been in the past, a manufacturer is not required to submit to ASA any bat models for approval. If you would like to have a particular bat model certified under the ASA 2004 Bat Performance Standard, please contact the manufacturer.

Q: Can I send in my bat to get tested and approved by an ASA approved testing facility?

A: No. Since 2000, ASA requires that any bat submitted for ASA approval must be tested at an ASA approved testing facility. The submitter of the bat must sign an ASA testing agreement. If the bat satisfies the ASA Bat Performance Standard, then the submitter of the bat must sign an ASA license agreement. Therefore, only manufacturers can submit bats for testing.