

SOFTBALL NEW ZEALAND

2024/2025
HEARTLAND
TOURNAMENT

Rules and Explanations



13 December 2024

National Heartland Tournament

The Heartland Tournament for the 2024/25 season is to be based on the following principles:

1. Association based with a Men's and Women's competitions.
2. Format to be a Three-day tournament
3. To be held 14th – 16th February 2025 in Manawatu.

Entry Fee

The entry fee is \$500 (including GST) per team.

Eligibility

All provincial softball associations affiliated to SNZ are eligible to compete under the jurisdiction of Softball New Zealand.

For Heartland, Auckland, Wellington, Hutt Valley, North Harbour and Canterbury Associations are not allowed pick up players of any sort, they can only have players affiliated to their own respective association.

Players whose Association enters or does not enter a team in the NFC are eligible to be selected by another association (*except Auckland, Wellington, Hutt Valley, North Harbour and Canterbury*) within their region, as defined below:

1. Auckland.
2. Northland, North Harbour, Franklin, Counties Manukau, Waikato, Western Bay of Plenty.
3. Taranaki, Wanganui, Manawatu, Horowhenua, Hawkes Bay, Tairāwhiti.
4. Wellington, Hutt Valley.
5. Canterbury.
6. Nelson, Marlborough, South Canterbury, Central Otago, Otago, Southland.

Any two or more provinces (*excluding Auckland, Hutt Valley, Wellington, North Harbour and Canterbury*) within the regions category above may combine for the purposes of creating one team to enter the Heartland Tournament. A combined team can incorporate in its name all the names of the provinces making up the combined team, or have a separate name representing the combined teams. For clarity, players from the provinces making up the combined team are not classified as pick up players.

To encourage combined team entries to tournaments, Regions 2, 3, & 6 may be overlapped. 2

NZ Players who wish to play in the tournament who are based overseas and who are not affiliated to a NZ association, can register to play for the association they were registered with before they left to be based overseas.

Only one international player can participate in each Association. For clarity, the import/international classification is for players who do not have permanent residency, citizenship and/or a NZ Passport. The overseas player must have played a minimum of 3 premier club games (Top 2 divisions within a local association competition) within the season (tournaments do not count) before the start day of the Heartland Tournament.

One team from each Association (or combination Associations) shall be eligible to participate in the Heartland Tournament. A second team is encouraged from associations however must be selected on a genuine A and B team basis.

Note: No player shall play for any association in any tournament or fixture unless that player meets the following criteria at least **28 days prior** to the commencement of the tournament or fixture.

- The player is affiliated to the specific association.
- The player has completed any Inter-Association and/or WBSA clearance.

Overall Exemption

In order to provide the best competition possible, SNZ reserves the right to allow exceptions to the aforementioned rules. This will only be done under exceptional circumstances and any decision to give a dispensation will be considered and approved by the Tournament Dispensation Committee. All decisions will be based on the proviso that no one team or association gains an unfair advantage and what is generally considered to be in the best interest of the game.

Pick Up Rules

Associations may pick up a total of four (4) players from anywhere in the country, provided that their registered association does not require them. Auckland, Hutt Valley, Wellington, North Harbour and Canterbury are excluded from this pick-up rule, they must select players affiliated to their own respective association.

Players may be eligible as regional pick-ups for regional teams even though their association has entered the respective tournament (*This means teams can use unlimited regional pick-ups from their own region*). Players from Auckland, Wellington, Hutt Valley, and Canterbury cannot be considered as regional pick-ups for the smaller associations.

- The player must, in the first instance, be available for selection for the association or association regional team they are registered with.
- Players not listed on their association's lodged return schedule by the due date for the applicable tournament are granted automatic and irrevocable release for the period of the tournament.
- It is compulsory for the parent association to be notified of all pick up players.
- **Please note:** Where requests for pick-ups involve age group players playing at tournaments above their own age group, the player's home association has the right to decline an application for pick up if it is considered to be in the player's best interest.

Heartland and NFC – Player Crossover

Where an association is entering both a team within the National Fastpitch Championships, and in the Heartland Tournament, a player registered within that association cannot appear on both rosters. *E.g. If North Harbour enters a men's team in both Heartland and NFC, then no players can be shared between the North Harbour rosters. However, if a player is selected for their registered association (NH) for Heartland, but not selected for NFC, they are eligible to be picked up by another association to compete in the National Fastpitch Championships.*

If an association enters a team in the National Fastpitch Championships, but not the Heartland Tournament, no players within that association's NFC roster can be considered as a pick-up for the Heartland Tournament.

Entries from clubs or teams from overseas may be accepted and they may compete but cannot play in the main playoff section of the tournament with the ability to win the tournament.

SNZ Coaches Code of Conduct

1. Respect the rights, dignity and value of every individual athlete as a human being

- o Treat everyone equally regardless of sex, disability, ethnic origin or religion.
- o Respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete in order to help each athlete reach their full potential

2. Maintain high standards of integrity

- o Play within the rules of softball and in the spirit of fair play, while encouraging your athletes to do the same.
- o Advocate a sporting environment free of drugs and other performance enhancing substances within the guidelines of the New Zealand Sports Drug Agency and the World Anti-Doping Code.
- o Do not disclose any confidential information relating to athletes without their written prior consent.

3. Be a positive role model, act in a way that projects a positive image of a coach

- o All athletes deserve equal attention and opportunities
- o Ensure the athlete's time spent with you is a positive experience
- o Be fair, considerate and honest with athletes
- o Encourage and promote a healthy lifestyle – refrain from smoking and drinking alcohol around athletes.

4. Professional Responsibilities

- o Display high standards in your language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation. Display control, courtesy, respect, honesty, dignity and professionalism to all involved within our sport - this includes opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, the media, parents and spectators.
- o Encourage your athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- o Refrain from criticism of other coaches and athletes.
- o Be reasonable in your demands on your athletes time and ensure there is an appropriate balance between sporting involvement, family, education and career objectives

5. Commit to providing a quality service

- o Seek continual improvement through ongoing coach education, and other personal and professional development opportunities.
- o Provide athletes with planned and structured training programmes appropriate to their needs and goals.
- o Seek advice and assistance from professionals when additional expertise is required.
- o Maintain appropriate records.

6. Provide a safe environment for training and competition

- o Adopt appropriate risk management strategies to ensure that the training and/or competition environment is safe.
- o Ensure equipment and facilities meet safety standards.
- o Ensure equipment, rules, training and the environment is appropriate for the age, physical and emotional maturity, experience and ability of the athletes.
- o Show concern and caution toward sick and injured athletes.
- o Allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

- o Encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required.
- o Maintain the same interest and support toward sick and injured athletes as you would to healthy athletes.

7. Protect your athletes from any form of personal abuse

- o Refrain from any form of verbal, physical and emotional abuse towards your athletes.
- o Refrain from any form of sexual and racial harassment, whether verbal or physical.
- o Do not harass abuse or discriminate against athletes on the basis of their sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religious ethical beliefs, race, colour, ethnic origins, employment status, disability or distinguishing characteristics.
- o Any physical contact with athletes should be appropriate to the situation and necessary for the athlete's skill development.
- o Be alert to any forms of abuse directed towards athletes from other sources while in your care.

Softball New Zealand Players' Code of Conduct

As a participant in any activity held by or under the auspices of Softball New Zealand you must meet the following requirements in regard to your conduct during any such activity or event

1. Be a positive role model for Softball at all times, and accept responsibility for your actions.
2. Must not Smoke or drink alcohol in 'on Diamond' Softball Uniform
3. Participate within the competition conditions and rules, and in the spirit of fair play.
4. Respect opposition players and officials and treat them with proper regard for their rights, obligations and position held in Softball or the community.
5. Refrain from offensive or abusive language and gestures.
6. Comply with Umpires' decisions in a professional manner
7. Cooperate with all official requests to promote and market Softball in a professional manner.
8. Must not make derogatory or demeaning remarks about any athletes, coaches or participants
9. Do not commit acts of aggression.
10. Perform any duties and responsibilities where you are a representative of Softball New Zealand in a mature, fair and professional manner.