



2026 SCARECROW SLAM TOURNAMENT RULES

Tournament Philosophy

The **2026 Scarecrow Slam** is designed to provide teams with a competitive and enjoyable end-of-season tournament while continuing the developmental philosophy of the Stateline Fall League.

We want teams to compete and play to win, but we also want everyone to remember that this is youth softball. **Sportsmanship, player safety, player development and respect for opponents and umpires remain our highest priorities.**

Unless specifically modified within these tournament rules, all current **NFHS Softball Rules** will govern play. This follows the same basic rules used throughout the Stateline Fall League.



TOURNAMENT FORMAT

Each age division will have a **Gold Bracket and Silver Bracket**.

A team's **first tournament game determines which bracket it advances into:**

WIN your first game → Gold Bracket

LOSE your first game → Silver Bracket

Once teams have been placed into their Gold or Silver bracket, play will continue according to the published tournament bracket.

Every team is guaranteed a **minimum of two tournament games.**

🏆 **Silver Bracket Championship Games — Sunday, October 25th**

🏆 **Gold Bracket Championship Games — Monday evening, October 26th**

HOME & VISITOR — CATCHERS CHALLENGE

There will be **NO traditional coin flip** to determine home and visitor during the 2026 Scarecrow Slam.

Instead, **HOME and VISITOR will be determined by the Scarecrow Slam Catchers Challenge!**

Before each game, both catchers will come to home plate accompanied by their teammates, who are encouraged to gather around and cheer them on.

Each catcher will begin with all of her catching equipment removed and neatly stacked in front of her.

When the umpire says “**GO!**”, both catchers will put on all of their catching equipment.

The catcher on the **first-base side** will run to first base and return to home plate.

The catcher on the **third-base side** will run to third base and return to home plate.

Once back at home plate, each catcher must remove all of her equipment and stack it in front of her in the same manner it was stacked at the beginning.

🏆 **The first catcher to completely remove and properly restack all of her equipment wins the Catchers Challenge.**

The winning catcher will choose whether her team will be **HOME** or **VISITOR** for the game.



DUGOUT ASSIGNMENTS

The Catchers Challenge does **NOT** determine dugout assignments.

For the **entire 2026 Scarecrow Slam Tournament**:

Higher-Seeded Team → THIRD-BASE DUGOUT

Lower-Seeded Team → FIRST-BASE DUGOUT

This assignment remains the same regardless of which team wins the Catchers Challenge or which team is home or visitor.



GAME TIME LIMITS

The Scarecrow Slam will use the same basic time limits as the Stateline Fall League:

No new inning will begin after 70 minutes.

An 80-minute drop-dead time limit will be enforced.

If the 80-minute drop-dead time expires while a batter is at the plate, that batter will be permitted to complete her current at-bat. Once the at-bat is completed, the game will immediately end.

If the inning has not been completed, the official score will **revert to the score at the conclusion of the last fully completed inning**.

Tournament Games Cannot End in a Tie

Because this is bracket play, games requiring a winner will continue under the tournament tiebreaker procedure if the score is tied at the conclusion of regulation play.



LENGTH OF GAMES

8U & 10U — 6 innings

12U & 14U — 7 innings



RUN LIMITS

Maximum runs permitted per inning:

8U — 4 runs

10U — 4 runs

12U — 5 runs

14U — 7 runs



MERCY RULE

A game will end if one team leads by:

12 runs after 3 innings

10 runs after 4 innings

8 runs after 5 innings



DEFENSIVE PLAYERS

8U & 10U — 10 defensive players

12U & 14U — 9 defensive players

PITCHING DISTANCES

8U — 35 feet

10U — 35 feet

12U — 40 feet

14U — 43 feet

PITCHING LIMITS

The Fall League pitching limits will remain in effect during the Scarecrow Slam:

8U — Maximum 2 innings

10U — Maximum 2 innings

12U — Maximum 4 innings

14U — Maximum 4 innings

One pitch constitutes an inning pitched.

8U COACH PITCH

The first two innings of every 8U game will be coach pitch.

Beginning with the third inning, player-pitch rules will apply.

After ball four or a maximum of six player pitches, regardless of the count, the offensive coach will enter to pitch.

The batter will then receive up to **two coach pitches** to put the ball into play, with one additional pitch permitted only if the second coach-pitched ball is fouled off. The maximum is three coach pitches.

If the ball is not put into play by the final permitted coach pitch, the batter is out.

The coach must pitch with at least one foot on the pitching rubber. The defensive pitcher must have one foot inside the pitching circle and one foot outside.

The pitching coach may not coach while the ball is live and must remain in the circle until the play has ended and the umpire has called time.

There is **no stealing during coach pitch**.

8U and 10U must have a coach behind the catcher to retrieve passed balls and help keep the game moving.



BATTING ORDER

All players present will bat using a **continuous batting order**.



COURTESY RUNNERS

Courtesy runners are permitted for the pitcher and catcher in accordance with NFHS rules.

With **two outs**, a **courtesy runner must be used for the catcher**. If the catcher is on base when the second out occurs, a courtesy runner must be used.



BUNTING

Bunting is permitted.



DROPPED THIRD STRIKE

8U & 10U — Not permitted

12U & 14U — NFHS rules apply



STEALING

8U — No stealing

10U — Stealing of second and third base only after the pitch leaves the pitcher's hand

12U & 14U — NFHS rules apply



ROSTERS & BORROWED PLAYERS

Only properly registered and eligible players may participate in the **2026 Scarecrow Slam**.

Borrowed players are intended to allow a team to field enough players to compete. **Borrowed players may not be used to strengthen a team's tournament roster.**

Borrowed players:

- May **not** pitch
- May **not** catch
- Must **bat last** in the batting order
- May not replace a rostered player who is present and able to play
- Must meet the age-division borrowing requirements
- May **not** be borrowed from an older age division
- May **NOT be borrowed from a team that has already been eliminated from the Scarecrow Slam Tournament**

The Fall League's normal borrowing structure permits players to be borrowed from designated younger or same-age divisions while prohibiting borrowing from an older division.



IMPORTANT — ELIMINATED TEAMS

Once a team has been **eliminated from the Scarecrow Slam**, players from that team become **ineligible to be borrowed by any team still competing in the tournament.**

A team may not use the elimination of another team as an opportunity to add players or strengthen its roster for later-round or championship games.

Borrowed players must be reported to the opposing coach and umpire before the game and identified on the lineup card.

Any roster or borrowed-player exception must receive approval from the Tournament Director before the player participates.

Use of an ineligible player may result in **forfeiture of the game and/or additional tournament disciplinary action.**



BE READY TO PLAY

Teams should be prepared to play **at least 30 minutes before their scheduled game time.**

If the previous game finishes early and the field and umpire are available, the next game may begin early.

There will be **no infield or outfield warm-ups on the game diamond.** Teams should complete their warm-ups before entering the field.



WEATHER & LIGHTNING

Player safety always comes first.

Whenever thunder is heard or lightning is observed, play will immediately be suspended and players, coaches, spectators and officials must seek appropriate shelter.

Play may not resume until **30 minutes have passed since the last occurrence of thunder or lightning.** Each additional occurrence will restart the 30-minute waiting period.

Because this is a multi-day tournament, Stateline Sports Group reserves the right to modify:

- Game times
- Time limits
- Field assignments
- Playing locations
- Tournament schedules

when necessary because of weather, field conditions or other circumstances.



SPORTSMANSHIP & CONDUCT

All players, coaches, parents and spectators are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship before, during and after every Scarecrow Slam game.

Respect must be shown toward:

- Opponents
- Teammates
- Umpires
- Coaches
- Volunteers
- Tournament staff

Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated.

Head coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players, assistant coaches, team personnel and spectators.

Abusive language, harassment of officials, taunting, disruptive behavior or interference with a game may result in warnings, ejections, forfeitures or additional disciplinary action.

Compete hard, play to win and support your team—but always remember that this is youth softball.



TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR AUTHORITY

The Tournament Director and Executive Director of Stateline Sports Group retain the authority to interpret all Scarecrow Slam rules and make decisions regarding situations not specifically addressed.

They may modify tournament procedures, schedules, field assignments, time limits or other rules when necessary because of:

- Player safety
- Weather
- Field conditions
- Competitive balance
- Tournament operations

The Fall League similarly gives Stateline Sports Group final authority to interpret rules and make necessary operational changes.

All decisions of the Tournament Director or Executive Director regarding tournament administration are final.



ONE FINAL REMINDER

The **Scarecrow Slam** is supposed to be FUN!

We have the **Catchers Challenge**, the **Team Costume Contest**, Gold and Silver brackets and championship games to give our players a fun and memorable finish to the fall season.

Play hard. Compete to win. Cheer for your teammates. Respect your opponents and umpires. Have some fun along the way.



Welcome to the 2026 Scarecrow Slam!

