

CLASSES OF COMPETITION

NSF ♦ MSF Softball-Minnesota Sports Federation

CLASSIFICATION PHILOSOPHY

The intent of the Federation team classification system is to place teams in a division in which they are competitive. The Federation philosophy that "WINNING IS NOT EVERYTHING" BUT STRIVING TO WIN is the most important consideration must be kept in mind when classifying teams.

Consequently, teams which go 0-2 in a tournament are by no means automatically considered to be inappropriately classified. Many factors such as the margin of defeat, the sports community's history, the teams which were played, and the number of teams in the division, etc. are carefully weighed before permission is granted for a sports community or a team to move down. Not all teams can win championships and success in Federation play should not be related to winning or losing, but rather related to the amount of effort put forth. When a league or team disregards all principles of fair play by intentionally competing at a level below their ability in an attempt to win a championship, the team has not only cheated themselves, but also the entire program. The opportunity to match skills against an equally skilled opponent is what "sport" is about. Many teams, in their efforts to win games, leagues and tournaments, purposely match their superior skills against less skilled opponents. The intent of sport is being sacrificed for the sake of a won/loss record and the accompanying material rewards.

All Federation sports participants need to assure that their motives for participating are in line with the original purpose of sport. If this is done the program will continue to flourish.

The classification rules listed below apply to Softball divisions. Specific classification procedures and designations for each division of play are found under each division's respective section. It is not necessary to designate a team classification when registering teams that are participating in divisions of play where only one tournament is conducted. These divisions of play are listed below:

Modified Pitch

Church Slowpitch

To avoid misunderstandings please carefully review all classification rules and procedures prior to team registration.

1. The class(es) of competition in which a sports community's team(s) compete are designated by MSF. This classification system has been developed to provide equalized competition at several levels.
2. A team may not have more than three players from a higher class unless they petition to lower their team classification. (Example: Triple Crown Gaming wins the class "C" state championship and returns or recruits any combination of four or more players who were/are registered on a "C" team or higher during the preceding season or current season. Triple Crown Gaming must move up to class B the following year since they returned or recruited four or more of the players that comprise their softball team). **Note: for men's fastpitch, the fastpitch committee shall determine if a team is "returning team" based off their roster.**
3. A player may not play more than one full letter class lower than their player classification. (Example: Mike's Place has 1-3 players who played on a class C team in the previous or current season. The rest of the roster has played at D or lower. The lowest class Mike's Place could play in without petitioning is class D.)
4. Sports community classifications are reviewed annually by the MSF slow or fastpitch Classification Committee, the State Commissioner and Associate Commissioner. Communities/teams may be raised or lowered at the discretion of these ruling parties.
5. Softball community directors may raise a team's class at their discretion at any time.
6. MSF reserves the right to combine two or more classes of competition when an insufficient number of tournament entries exist to conduct a specific class of play.
7. Sports communities/teams may not move down without the written permission of the NSF ♦ MSF. The Reclassification Application, found on in the back of this guide, shall be forwarded to NSF ♦ MSF offices prior to February 15 for slowpitch and May 1 for fastpitch of the current year.
8. Slowpitch teams that have been moved up may not petition to move down for a minimum of two years and must have played in post-season play at least one year in their new class. Exception: Class A, B and C slowpitch teams may petition to move down after one year of post season play in their new class.
9. Fastpitch Class C State Champion and all Class D move-ups must play state in their higher class at least two years before petitioning to move back down. Class C State runner-up may petition to move down after playing in Class B State for one year.
10. Teams that are classified higher by another organization in the state and wish to be classified lower in the MSF program, must petition the applicable Sports Federation classification committee for their classification status in the MSF program by March 15 of the current year.
11. Men's Fastpitch: If a "C" team finishes in first or second place of the state tournament it shall automatically be considered for move up to class "B" the following year. If a team finishes in the top one-four in the class D state tournament, it shall automatically be considered for move up to class C the following year. Any team may be reclassified to a higher or lower level by the fastpitch committee if the committee feels that the team is inappropriately classified.
12. For team classification purposes, a player's current class shall be considered the most recent post-season tournament they have played in during the previous season or current season.

13. Men's Slowpitch: If a men's team finishes in the top two of the Class C Slowpitch State Tournament or North American Championships two out of three years, it shall automatically move up to Class B the following year. The top 1-2 teams in "DD" state shall automatically be considered for move up to "C" the following year. The top 2-4 teams in "D" state shall automatically be considered for move up to "DD" the following year. If a team finishes in the top four of the class "EE" state tournament it shall automatically move up to class "DD" the following year. Teams that finish from 5-16 in "EE" shall automatically be moved up to "D" the following year. Teams that finish in the top 2-4 in "E" state shall automatically be considered for move up to "D" the following year. Teams that have been moved up and do not participate shall remain in their higher class at least until such time that they participate. Replacement, nationally qualified and host teams must finish in the top 4-C, top 8-DD,D places in the state tournament to be moved up one class.
14. Women's Slowpitch: If a women's team finishes in the top two of the Class C State Tournament, two out of three years, it shall automatically move to open. If a women's team finishes in the top four of the class DD slowpitch state tournament, it shall automatically move up to class C the following year. If a women's team finishes in the top four of the class D slowpitch state tournament, it shall automatically move up class DD the following year. If a women's team finishes in the top two-four of the class EE slowpitch state tournament, it shall automatically move up to class D the following year.
15. Men's Masters/Church Slowpitch: If a team finishes in the top one to four in the men's masters/church slow state tournament it shall automatically be reviewed for move up to class A or B the following year. Men's masters teams with four or more players from their men's slowpitch team must be classified one class higher than their men's slowpitch team. Additionally, masters teams that combine two men's slowpitch teams that result in four or more players of a specific class must be classified one class higher in masters slowpitch than the combined class of the men's slowpitch team(s). (e.g. If four or more players from one or two or more "B" slowpitch teams combine to form a masters (35) slowpitch team that team shall be classified "A", etc.) (Note: First year men's masters slowpitch teams may petition MSF Offices to be classified in the same class in masters as they are classified in men's slow.)
16. The state slowpitch and fastpitch committees may retroactively change reclassification rules to maintain balance in classes.
17. If a team moves up on their own volition and goes 3-2 or better in state tournament play, they shall remain in the class they voluntarily moved up to unless they are reclassified to an even higher class based on their state tournament finish.
18. Co-Rec Slowpitch: If a team finishes in the top two-four in the class B, top four-eight in the class C or top eight in the class D state slowpitch tournament, it shall automatically move up one class the following year. If a team finishes in the top four in national tournament play they shall automatically move up one class the following year.
19. Any team that goes 2-2 or better in state tournament may not petition to move down.
20. Any team that wins two or more games in National Championship Finals play may not move down if they return 4 or more players from the previous years roster.
21. Once teams are registered in a specific class they shall remain so registered for the entire season unless the league director submits a written request for a class change and it is approved by MSF offices. League directors or local sports community classification committees are responsible for applying the rules found here. Teams which are registered in different classes may compete in the same league but must be separated into respective classes for play-offs which qualify a team(s) for post-season MSF tournament play.
22. If the same team (four or more players) plays in two leagues, it must assume its highest classification.
23. Sports communities that have been newly formed or inadvertently omitted from the class designation lists should contact the MSF to ascertain their proper class designation.
24. Sports communities/teams found in violation of MSF classification rules shall be immediately disqualified from competition.

Team Classification Criteria

Men's Slow Pitch

Men's B = Allowed maximum of 3 players who played on A team in previous or current season

Men's C = Allowed maximum of 3 players who played on B team in previous or current season (0 from A teams)

Men's D = Allowed maximum of 3 players who played on C team in previous or current season (0 from A or B teams)

Men's E = Allowed maximum of 3 players who played on DD or D team in previous or current season (0 from A, B, or C teams)

Women's Slow Pitch

Women's B = Allowed maximum of 3 players who played on A team in previous or current season

Women's C = Allowed maximum of 3 players who played on B team in previous or current season (0 from A teams)

Women's DD & D = Allowed maximum of 3 players who played on C team in previous or current season (0 from A or B teams)

Women's EE = Allowed maximum of 3 players who played on DD or D team in previous or current season (0 from A, B, or C teams)

Classification Procedures and Class Designations

Teams shall be classified in the same class they were classified in the previous season if they return four players or more players unless they were moved up or down by the NSF ♦ MSF board.

Adult Fastpitch Pitcher Classification

All fastpitch pitchers must appear on the Minnesota Fastpitch Pitcher Classification list to pitch in MSF Registered Tournament and Postseason Tournament competition. Leagues may also adopt use of the list. Pitchers may not pitch in competition below their classification level unless special dispensation has been granted by the state fastpitch committee or their league allows it in local league play. Pitchers do not need to reapply for classification each year unless there has been a change in their pitching ability. The Minnesota Fastpitch Committee reserves the right to reclassify a pitcher at any time. Pitchers classification list will appear at msf1.org. The pitcher classification form can be found in the back of the guidebook.

Teams Reclassified for 2026

By action of the Sports Federation Board of Directors and in accordance with the reclassification rules, the top finishers in 2025 postseason tournament competition have been moved up in an effort to maintain parity within classes and balance the number of teams in classes statewide.

This reclassification process occurs on an annual basis to maintain **integrity** in the state's classes of competition.

Slowpitch teams that have been moved up may not petition to move down for a **minimum of two years** and must have played in post-season play at least one year in their new class. **Exception:** Class A, B and C Slowpitch teams may petition to move down after one year of post-season play in their new class.

Fastpitch teams that have been moved up must play state in their new class at least two years before petitioning to move back down. **Exception:** Class C state runner-up may petition to move down after playing in Class B State for one year.

MEN'S SLOW PITCH RECLASSIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION RULE: If a men's team wins the Class C Slowpitch State Tournament or NSF North American Championships two out of three years, it shall automatically move up to Class B the following year.

C MEN'S SLOW TO B
NONE

CLASSIFICATION RULE: If a men's team finishes in the top one-two of the Class DD Slowpitch State Tournament, it shall automatically be considered for move up to Class C the following year.

DD MEN'S SLOW TO C
None

CLASSIFICATION RULE: If a men's team finishes in the top two-four of the Class D State tournament it shall automatically be considered for move up to Class DD the follow year.

E MEN'S SLOW EAST TO D
None

E MEN'S SLOW WEST TO D
None

MEN'S MASTERS SLOW PITCH RECLASSIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION RULE: If a team finishes in the top one-two in C Men's Masters Slowpitch State Tournament, it shall automatically be considered for move up to Class B the following year.

C MEN'S MASTERS (35) TO B
None

WOMEN'S SLOW PITCH RECLASSIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION RULE: No mandatory state reclassification rule in Women's slowpitch as all teams begin in one bracket, then split into Tier I and Tier II.

CO-REC SLOW PITCH RECLASSIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION RULE: No mandatory state reclassification rule in Class B/C co-rec slowpitch (subject to the discretion of the board of directors).

B&C CO-REC

None

CLASSIFICATION RULE: No mandatory state reclassification rule in co-rec slowpitch (subject to the discretion of the board of directors).

D CO-REC TO C

None

ADULT FASTPITCH RECLASSIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION RULE: If a team finishes in the top six of the fastpitch national championships, it shall comply with applicable National reclassification rules.

B MEN'S FAST TO A

None

CLASSIFICATION RULE: If a C team finishes in first or second place of the state tournament it shall automatically be considered for move up to Class B the following year.

C MEN'S FAST TO B

Grey Ducks, St. Paul

CLASSIFICATION RULE: If a team finishes in the top one-four of the Class D fastpitch state tournament, it shall automatically be considered for move up to Class C the following year.

D MEN'S FAST TO C

None

NATIONAL RECLASSIFICATION RULES

MANDATORY RECLASSIFICATION RULE: All teams reclassified by NSF National Reclassification Rules will also be reclassified in the MSF program.

MEN'S SLOW E to D

None

All teams reclassified by NSF national reclassification rules must play in state/national championship competition in their new class at least one year prior to being allowed to petition to move down.