

Congressional Softball League (CSL)

2014 TOURNAMENT SCHEDULING & TIE-BREAKING GUIDELINES

OVERALL GUIDELINE GOALS

Since the CSL is a casual league comprised of teams with varying skill levels, the tournament was designed to allow each team—competitive or casual—to play at least two games before elimination. Group pool structure gives each team two games. The group winners go on to play in a double-elimination format later... EXCEPT when the commissioner deems that weather delays make it more feasible to end the tournament with single-elimination. (This is to prevent the repeat of a hurricane-struck year when the championship round was played on October 1st.)

August Preliminary Group Competition

Group qualifying rounds allow teams to play a minimum of 2 tournament games rather than be subject to single elimination within a straight bracketing format. Season rankings are used to seed the teams in the group play and then to re-seed the teams in the championship round.

NOTE: Some group pairings are purely random according to the specific times that teams requested to play on a certain day...potentially, if all of the top four teams that were ranked at the end of the season requested to play on the tournament's first morning, more than likely, two of them would be eliminated since they limited their schedules to the randomness of other teams with the same schedule. Those teams without scheduling limitations are then evenly divided throughout the other groups.

Teams are initially grouped according to their specifically requested start date and/or play time during their chosen August day. All other teams are distributed by seed evenly into the remaining groups. The format usually includes 4, 5 or 6 teams per group, with one or two teams advancing to the Championship format of a straight double-elimination round of twelve (Dazzling Dozen©).

Regardless of grouping, teams only play 2 games in their group unless more than the number of designated winning teams for that group has undefeated (2-0) records coming out of their group competition. This is most common in groups of six when the top three highest seeds do not play each other head-to-head, but enjoy the reward of their higher season seeding by playing against the lowest three seeds in their group.

NOTE: The rules do not apply tiebreaker formulas to eliminate undefeated teams. Their wins earn them at least one more tiebreaker game of head-to-head competition on the field. This only applies if two teams are undefeated, and exceed the number of winning teams designated from their group. If three teams are undefeated, tiebreakers determine the highest seed of the undefeated teams that will move on to the championship round. The other two play a tiebreak game to determine which team advances.

TIE-BREAKING CRITERIA GUIDELINES

Tie-breaking criterion shall be applied in the order and sequence numbered below to all teams within a group to determine the winner(s) of that group. If tournament officials cannot determine the winner(s) by the first criterion, officials shall apply each succeeding criterion until a determination is made.

Group teams may have such results which require that many, or all of the criteria listed — numbers 1-6 below — must be used. In any case, the order of the listed tiebreakers shall be followed in sequence; with number 1 used first and number 6 used last. (See example scenarios below.)

Tie-breaking Guidelines

- 1.) Teams that have less wins than another team in the group will NOT advance. Exception: More than one team is scheduled to advance from a group (usually a 5 or more group structure), and one team is undefeated but others have one loss.
- 2.) Head-to-head results determine the winner ONLY IF 2 TEAMS IN A GROUP have an identical 1-1 record. (If three or more teams in a group have identical 1-1 records, but succeeding tiebreakers #3-5 below eventually leave two teams that actually played head-to-head, NO head-to-head comparisons will be made at that time. Rather, criterion number six (6), a coin toss, despite an actual head-to-head score, shall determine the winner. The fact that both teams survived competition through five tiebreaker levels of scrutiny in these guidelines makes them equal in standing at the end.)
- 3.) A runs differential formula shall establish a number, which, if higher than another team, shall determine a winner. The formula shall only apply to the games within a group and add all runs scored by a team as a positive number, with all runs scored against a team as a negative number. These two numbers shall then be totaled. The team with the highest positive number or, if no team has a positive number, the team with the lowest negative number shall be the winner.
- 4.) A team that allowed the least number of runs scored against it shall be the winner.
- 5.) A team which has scored the most runs shall be the winner.
- 6.) The flip of a coin shall determine the winner.

Group Format Examples

In this format, the team of a group of three that wins both games advances. However, if each team has a win and a loss, the tiebreaker guidelines above will apply to determine which team advances. Each tiebreaker guideline will be used in sequential order until a winner is decided.

In groups of four, five or six teams, two or more teams may have 2-0 records coming out of group play. In such cases where three teams have undefeated records in group play, but only two teams are to advance, the tiebreakers will be deployed to determine the TOP TEAM of the three...which will automatically advance. The other two teams will then compete in a playoff game to determine which team advances (ONLY if more undefeated teams exist than the designated number of teams slated to advance to the championship round from the group).

MATCHING TEAMS IN GROUPS:

Note that in certain group formats—a 5-team POD for example—the highest seed will play the two lowest seeds (three and four rankings difference). However, it is mathematically impossible for the second seed in the group to also play the two lowest seeds because then, the third seed could not play since 1, 2, 4 and 5 would be the only teams in the group to play their two games against each other. Therefore, Seed #2 plays against 3 and 4 (one and two rankings difference) while Seed #3 plays against 2 and 5 (also one and two rankings difference).

Scenario I

This scenario is for a three-team group* where teams A, B, and C play each other:

A vs B at 9 AM (A wins 14-8) (Winner A plays at 11 AM)
B vs C at 10 AM (C wins 18-8)
(Team B is eliminated with 2 losses; A & C have 1-0 records)
A vs C at 11 AM
(Winner advances with 2-0 record; loser eliminated with 1-1 record)

Scenario II

In this 3-team scenario, tiebreakers are employed since each team wins one game:

Schedule	Result	Record
A vs B at 9 AM	(A wins 14-8, and plays at 11 AM)	(A 1-0, B 0-1, C 0-0)
B vs C at 10 AM	(B wins 18-9)	(A 1-0, B 1-1, C 0-1)
A vs C at 11 AM	(C wins 15-13)	(A 1-1, B 1-1, C 1-1)

In this scenario, the Tie-Breaking Guidelines are followed:

Tiebreaker #1.) Does not apply. All teams have an equal number of wins.

Tiebreaker #2.) Does not apply. Each team won and lost in 3-way head-to-head competition.

Tiebreaker #3.) Eliminates Team C with a -7 score. Does not apply for Teams A & B which both have +3 scores.

The formula number for Team A is scored runs $(14+13)= +26$ and given up runs $(-8-15)=-23$ for a formula number of +3.

The formula number for Team B is scored runs $(18+8)= +26$ and given up runs $(-14-9)=-23$ for a formula number of +3.

The formula number for Team C is scored runs $(9+15)= +24$ and given up runs $(-18-13)=-31$ for a formula number of -7.

Tiebreaker #4.) Does not apply for Teams A & B. Both teams gave up 23 runs.

Tiebreaker #5.) Does not apply for Teams A & B. Both teams scored 26 runs.

Tiebreaker #6.) A flip of a coin shall determine the winner.

***SCHEDULING NOTE:**

(For 3-game groups only.) The outcome of the first game in a three-team group determines which teams play next because the games run consecutively on the same field over a 3-hour period. For example, Teams A & B play at 9 AM. The winner sits an hour while the loser next plays Team C so that no team may have 2 wins after 2 games...thus preventing the third game from being played. Tournament officials will instruct teams about who plays the second and third games of a group. In four-team, five-team or six-team groups, this type of last minute scheduling is not necessary.