There have been numerous questions from PIAA member schools regarding the playing of interscholastic softball on the artificial surfaces in their school stadiums or fields that host football and / or soccer contests.

Can this be done?
The short answer is if the field upon inspection by the umpire(s) complies with all current NFHS and PIAA Softball Rules -
- Specifically Rule 1 and 2,
- “Field and Equipment and Definitions”
- A school could possibly host contests.

Some items the field must have include, but are not limited to the following:
- All baselines, including 3 foot running lanes,
- batter’s box lines,
- pitching circle
- coaches’ box lines,
- dead ball area’s marked, etc..
PIAA SOFTBALL CONTESTS ON ARTIFICIAL SURFACES

Bases shall be securely attached to the ground. IE Velcro, etc.

Home plate shall be set flush with the ground and secured.

The pitcher’s plate shall be set in the ground with the top flush with the playing surface and secured.

The on-deck circle needs to be properly marked and safely distanced from home plate.

PIAA SOFTBALL CONTESTS ON ARTIFICIAL SURFACES

- There is a need to have a backstop or some type of nearest obstruction,
  - no closer than 25 feet
  - and no further than 30 feet from home plate to assist in protection for contestants and spectators.
PIAA SOFTBALL CONTESTS ON ARTIFICIAL SURFACES

Bench areas need to be clearly designated with proper markings and to provide a safe environment for all team personnel.

If schools have obstacles as part of their artificial field / surface; these obstacles must be outside the field of play and properly designated or padded to relieve any safety concerns.

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If schools would like to play on these surfaces, they may want to consult their schools’ solicitor to address the legal liability of such contests and to utilize factors of risk minimization to provide for a safe environment for the contestants and spectators.

If these objectives are achieved, then hosting a contest on artificial surfaces may be feasible.

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• Every effort should be made to play the contest; but not the risk of safety.

• If one of some of the above guidelines are not met and there is no safety issues; play the game and immediately report this to your chapter interpreter.

• Chapter interpreters immediately report this to your district and statewide rules interpreters.

• If there is safety issue IE Goal post to close, players benches in unsafe location, USE GOOD JUDGEMENT, put if cannot be correct, do not play the contest and report it as noted above!

PIAA SOFTBALL CONTESTS ON ARTIFICIAL SURFACES

The following are illustrations supporting the guidelines.
Are there any questions?