

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



NEWS RELEASE

Field Hockey Rules Committee Approves Self-Pass

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Hopkins

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (February 16, 2010) — One of the most significant rule changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Field Hockey Rules Committee makes a self-pass legal for several ball insertion situations. The changes, which were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors, will take effect with the 2010-11 season.

The changes will allow a team to use the self-pass as a means of inserting center passes, 16-yard hits, side-ins, free hits, long hits and all free hits awarded outside the 25-yard area. The defense must still remain 7 yards from the ball.

“The self-pass will improve the flow of the game and provide another option for schools,” said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Field Hockey Rules Committee. “It provides teams with some strategic choices.”

In an effort to help the umpire better distinguish the two teams on the field, short-sleeved or long-sleeved undergarments must either match the predominant

color of the uniform or be white. In addition, Rule 1-5-1a states that all undergarments worn by a team's players must be the same color.

"This gives the umpire an advantage when officiating to differentiate between players from both teams," Hopkins said.

The committee also simplified the procedures in taking a bully, which will help expedite the restarting of the game.

Rule 5-2-1a says that, in taking the bully, each player must face her opponent with her back parallel to the sideline, left shoulder toward the attacking goal, feet parallel and stick to the right of the ball, touching the ground. After the whistle is blown, the two players must tap the faces of their sticks together once, after which either player is able to play the ball.

"This will simplify the process of taking a bully," Hopkins said. "It will be easier to teach and to become more proficient and will help get the offense started."

Following are other changes made by the NFHS Field Hockey Rules Committee:

- A significant editorial change that will affect all sports requires that any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, including but not limited to loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems, must be removed from the contest immediately and shall not return to play before being cleared by an appropriate health care professional.
- In addition, Rule 1-6-4, which concerns illegal bowed sticks, has lifted the requirement of having a visible and permanently labeled stick. The committee decided the concern of illegal bowed sticks has

been resolved at the high school level, and because officials could more easily spot an illegal stick, the requirement could be dropped.

- Rule 5-1-3 was modified to require that all players except the player taking the center pass must remain at least 7 yards from the ball until it is played.
- Rule 10-1-1 was reorganized to clarify when a penalty corner is awarded and how it is taken. Penalty corners shall be awarded when the defense commits a foul within the circle and does not prevent the possible scoring of a goal, when the defense commits a deliberate foul inside the 25-yard line but outside the circle or when the defense intentionally hits the ball over the end line.

A complete listing of all rules changes approved by the committee is available on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Athletics & Fine Arts Activities” on the home page, and select “Field Hockey.”

Field hockey is the 11th-most popular sport for girls at the high school level, according to the 2008-09 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS, with 64,563 participants nationwide. The sport ranks 13th in school sponsorship with 1,818 schools sponsoring the sport. In addition, 174 boys participate in field hockey at 98 schools.

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This press release was written by Emily Newell, a spring intern in the NFHS

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and Rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing Rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.5 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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